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*Manuals of Religious Instruction
for Pupil Teachers.*

EDITED BY

JOHN PILKINGTON NORRIS, M.A.

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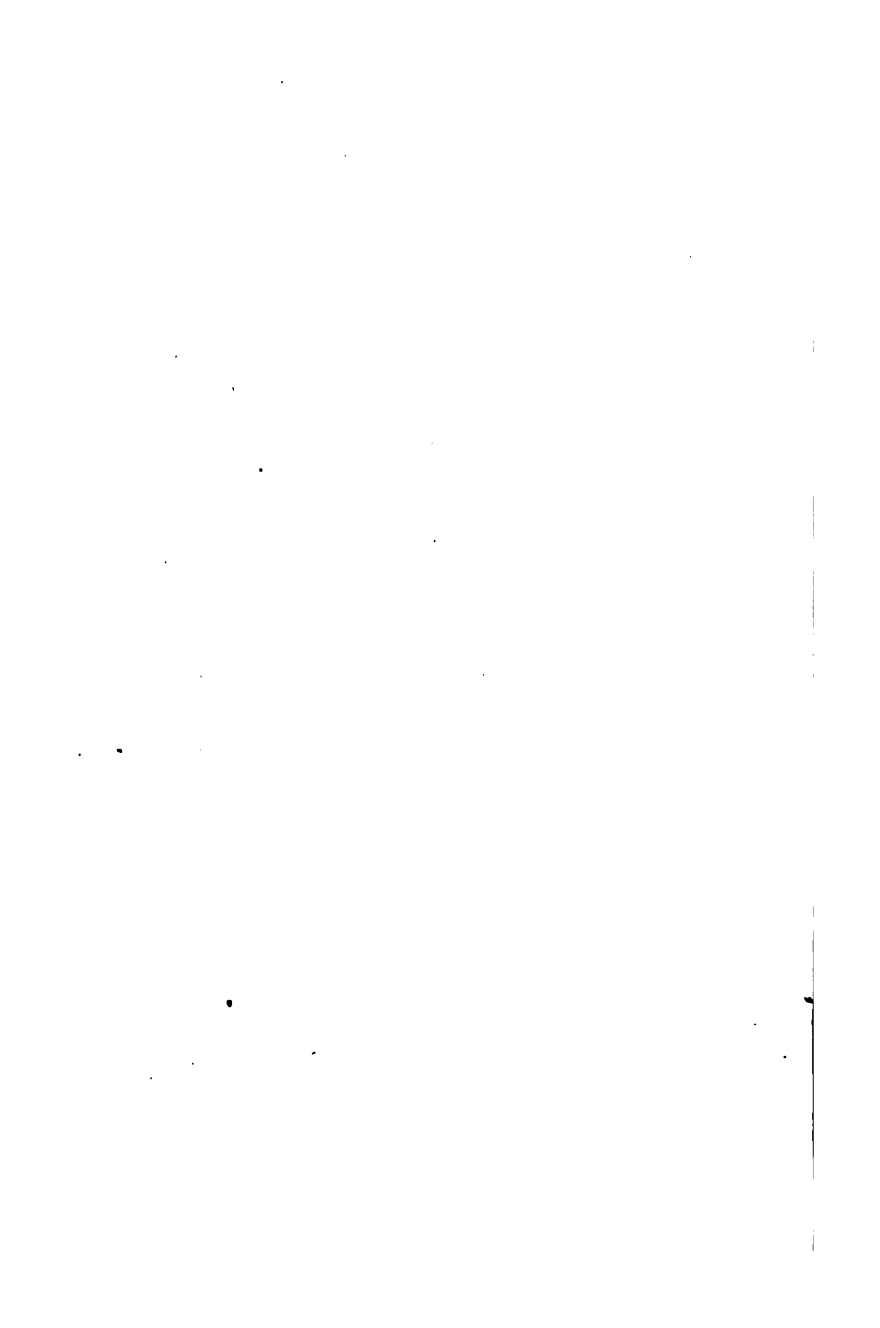
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LESSON I.

CHARACTERISTICS AND DESIGN OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL—ITS
TESTIMONY TO OUR LORD'S DIVINITY—THE GOSPEL OF
DOCTRINE—TRADITION RESPECTING THE ORIGIN OF
ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

OUR Lord's teaching, during the short period of His Ministry, may be divided into two distinct branches, having reference to the two most important matters on which it was His object to instruct His disciples and mankind. These were—

First, the nature of the kingdom He was about to set up in the world.

Secondly, the deeper and more difficult doctrines relating to His own Person, and His work of redemption.

The former of these is dwelt upon, more especially, in the Gospels of the first three Evangelists; while the latter is made known to us in the Gospel of St. John.

Again, in the three earlier Gospels, the *human* aspects of Christ are more particularly set before us—whether we contemplate Him in the first as the Messiah and King of Israel, in the second as the Servant or Minister of God, or in the third as the

perfect or ideal Man¹—the Friend and Redeemer of all men ; but the fourth Gospel holds up before us His *Divine Nature*, and portrays Him as "*the only begotten Son of God*"²—the Light of the world : and throughout his Gospel St. John seeks to make our Lord known to us from this high point of view.

This is one reason, at least, why the fourth Gospel differs so widely from the other three ; why in the first three we have recorded chiefly our Lord's teaching concerning His kingdom, including His parables, and in the fourth His conversations with His disciples, or with the spiritual guides of the Jewish people, about His own Person and Mission. These discourses demonstrate our Lord's Divinity, to which St. John wished to give special prominence. In the Galilæan Gospels we stand, as it were, in the outer sanctuary ; but St. John takes us behind the veil into the Holy of Holies, where, illumined by the Divine light of heavenly truth, we contemplate the higher mysteries of our faith.

St. John, it seems likely, possessed more culture than the other disciples, and a spiritual perception that gave him possibly a greater power of comprehending our Lord's higher and more spiritual teaching. This he would naturally wish to preserve by a written record ; and, as might be expected, we find it embodied in his Gospel.

¹ The differences of the three Gospels may probably be traced to their being addressed primarily to three distinct groups of Christian Churches—the Jewish and the Roman Churches, and the Greek Churches, founded by St. Paul.

² Each Gospel doubtless portrays our Lord, more or less, in *all* His several offices and aspects, and attests His Godhead ; but in each separately a distinctive prominence is given to *one* special view of His many-sided character.

He wrote besides for a later generation,¹—a generation already instructed in the leading facts of Christianity, as detailed in the oral teaching of the time, or narrated by St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke ; and in no other way can we account for the silence of the fourth Gospel about such events as the Transfiguration, the institution of the Eucharist, and the Ascension.

Again, when St. John wrote, heresies were rife. The simple belief of the first Christians had become clouded by the refinements of Greek philosophy, or was in danger from false brethren or leaders of sects ; some teaching that the Divine *Logos* (or Word) only descended upon Jesus at His Baptism and left Him again before His Crucifixion, others that His whole human nature was simply a shadow and delusion ; thus striking at the very root of the doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement.

One great object, then, that St. John may have had in view in writing his Gospel was the refutation of these heresies, by fully setting forth the Godhead of Christ ; and accordingly, while his narrative of the *human* life of Christ begins only at John the Baptist's witness to our Lord's Messiahship, the beloved Apostle shews Him to us pre-existing in Heaven as the Divine Word Which was "in the beginning with God and was God ;" "and

¹ St. John wrote his Gospel (in Greek) certainly after St. Paul's death in A.D. 68, and probably before A.D. 100, in which year the venerable Apostle was still living at Ephesus. The age of St. Paul and the age of St. John, which succeeded it, are both marked periods in Church history. The latter in common history is known as the age of the Roman Emperors Domitian, Nerva and Trajan, of the historians Suetonius and Tacitus, of Pliny the Younger, and of the poets Martial, Statius and Juvenal. St. John wrote therefore in a period of great literary activity, in the broad daylight of the Roman Empire.

we beheld His glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father."

Not only the first verse, however, but the whole Gospel, bears the same testimony ; and our Lord's own repeated declarations of oneness with the Father (as recorded by St. John) are *plain* and emphatic.

To take a few instances :—" If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also" (viii. 19) ; " I and My Father are One" (x. 30) ; " This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that *the Son of God* might be glorified thereby" (xi. 4) ; " He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (xiv. 9) ; " All things that the Father hath are Mine" (xvi. 15).

It is to St. John's Gospel that we turn for our Lord's promises in reference to the Holy Ghost—His teaching on the nature and mission of the Divine Spirit, to which the other Gospels contain only a few allusions. To Nicodemus (iii.), to the woman of Samaria (iv.), to the people at the Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 37-39), to the disciples, especially in His last sublime discourse (xiv—xvi.), does our Lord speak of the convincing, enlightening, sanctifying, comforting influences of the Holy Ghost ; and this record of our Lord's own words on this great and important theme is of itself sufficient to stamp a separate and peculiar character on the fourth Gospel.

It is the Lord Himself Who sends the Holy Ghost, and it is He Whom the Holy Ghost glorifies :—" If any man thirst" (saith our Lord), " let him come unto *Me* and drink" (vii. 37) ; " The Holy Ghost Whom the Father will send in *My* Name" (xiv. 26) ; " I will send Him unto you" (xvi. 7) ; " He shall glorify *Me*" (xvi. 14) ; " Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (xx. 22).

We may further cite a few of our Lord's own sayings that directly or indirectly imply His Godhead :—"I am the Resurrection and the Life : he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (xi. 25, 26) ; "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee" (xvii. 1) ; "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent" (ver. 3) ; "O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (ver. 5) ; "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them" (ver. 10).

Thus did our Lord claim for Himself equality with the Father. By Him the dead are raised, and He giveth eternal life to those who believe on Him. The glory of the Eternal God is His glory. He possesses all things in common with the Father. The Jews contemptuously rejected our Lord's claim to be anything more than the prophet of Nazareth—"a good man" some said, while others called him "a deceiver of the people ;" but they all understood His words about Himself to have but one meaning—the making Himself equal with God. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (v. 18) ; "For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy ; and because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God" (x. 33).

How strenuously did the Apostles ever reject all honour, homage or worship ! How careful were they to assure the people that they were men of like passions with themselves, and that the grace of God alone made

them to differ from others! But neither when the Jews sought to stone our Lord because He made Himself equal with God, nor afterwards, when accused of the same thing, did He repel the charge or say that they accused Him falsely. He is "the Bread from Heaven" (vi. 41); He is "the Light of the World" (viii. 12); He is the "Door," and "the Good Shepherd" Who gives to the sheep eternal life" (x. 9, 11).

St. John's Gospel is, then, the Gospel of doctrine. It is the treasury of our Lord's words, of which indeed, it mainly consists; and in it He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man Which is in Heaven (iii. 13), declares unto us the Father; and "here, in the stillness of our hearts, as we read these heavenly discourses, we seem to feel the Son of Man speaking to us as a man speaketh with his friend."¹

The differences between the earlier Gospels and the latest are nearly as great in the narrative as in the doctrinal portions. We have seen that one reason why St. John so carefully records our Lord's conversations about His Person and work was, probably, because they demonstrate His Divinity; and our Lord's ministry in Judæa—His doings in Jerusalem or Bethany, some of which gave rise to these discourses—are naturally given in connexion with them. Accordingly, while St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke narrate almost entirely the Galilæan ministry, and until the closing week pass over the Judæan ministry almost in silence, St. John dwells as exclusively upon the latter, which besides would be new to his readers, who were already familiar with the Galilæan Gospels or their substance. St. John omits our Lord's parables

¹ Bishop Ellicott.

altogether, and he mentions only one of the miracles already on record.

The fourth Gospel, again, differs from its predecessors almost as much in manner as in matter, in style as in story. Its author writes much as it might have been expected he would write in face of the dangers that beset the Church. He explains facts; he enforces doctrines; he speaks with all the authority of an aged Apostle; while his fellow Evangelists give us each, without comment, a plain narrative of the facts of our Lord's ministry, and the simple teaching which He addressed to the peasants of Galilee.

There is a tradition in reference to the origin of St. John's Gospel preserved by Eusebius, which, whether we accept it or not as fully authenticated, is at least an interesting anecdote of the primitive Church.

How St. John came to write his Gospel is said to have been as follows:—"In reply to the entreaties of his fellow disciples and bishops, John said, 'Fast with me for three days from this time, and whatever shall be revealed to each of us, whether it be favourable to my writing or not, let us relate it to one another.' On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John should relate all things in his own name, aided by the revision of all. What wonder is it then that John so constantly brings forward Gospel phrases, even in his Epistles, saying in his own person, 'What we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, these things have we written'?"¹

The Gospel of St. John has been received by the Church as authentic from the very earliest times.

¹ Prof. Westcott, quoted in Canon NORRIS's *Key to the Gospels*, p. 7.

Justin Martyr, who was born before the death of St. John (about A.D. 89), quotes from it, and the Fathers of the second, third and fourth centuries (to say nothing of the testimony of heretics) refer to it as the genuine production of the Apostle; and surely no book of Scripture was ever possessed of more conclusive internal evidence; for it would require all the credulity of the wildest scepticism to believe that any uninspired writer could compose the sublime discourses that speak to us from the pages of the fourth Evangelist. (See Note.)

St. John the Apostle, and author of the Gospel that bears his name, was the son of Zebedee (a fisherman of the Lake of Gennesaret) and Salome, one of the company of pious women who followed Jesus and ministered to Him of their substance.

St. John, his brother St. James, and St. Peter, were admitted to a closer intimacy with the Lord than the other Apostles. St. John especially was the disciple whom Jesus loved; and he, probably, best understood our Lord's higher teaching, which would have a peculiar attraction for his contemplative and spiritual mind.

After the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, St. John laboured with St. Peter at Jerusalem and in Samaria, and they became the most prominent members of the Apostolic band. Subsequently St. John presided over the Churches of Asia Minor, and resided at Ephesus, the chief city of the province. During the persecution under the Emperor Domitian, he was banished to the Isle of Patmos; but in the reign of Nerva he returned to Ephesus, where, having long survived his brother Apostles, he

died at a great age, about A.D. 100. Tradition makes his last words to have been, "Little children, love one another."

NOTE—LESSON I.

Credner, a critic whose rationalistic tendencies would not lead him to take too partial a view of such a matter, remarks : "If we were without any historical data whatever as to the authorship of the fourth Gospel, we should on internal grounds,—from the freshness and vividness of the narrative, the preciseness and minuteness of the details, the peculiar mention made of the Baptist and of the son of Zebedee, the inspiration of love and devotedness which the writer evinces towards Jesus, the irresistible charm that pervades the whole evangelical history,—have been led to the conclusion that the writer could only have been a native of Palestine, an immediate eye-witness, an apostle, a favourite of Jesus, could only, in a word, have been John."

Lachmann says that for his part he has left off reading works against the genuineness and historical character of St. John's Gospel, for he knows beforehand that they are worthless.
—*The Foundations of our Faith.*

LESSON II.

THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD—THE BAPTIST'S WITNESS
TO CHRIST'S GODHEAD—OBJECT AND FEATURES OF THE
BAPTIST'S MINISTRY—THE RESULT—THE LAMB OF GOD
--THE FIRST DISCIPLES OF JESUS—OUR LORD'S FIRST
MIRACLE. (i. ii. 1-II.)

TO establish the Church in the truth, and to put the disturbers of her peace to silence, St. John begins his Gospel with a statement of the grand and blessed doctrine, that her Lord is the Eternal Word that was in the beginning with God—that He is God; and just as the *words* of a man reveal his thoughts, so the Divine *Word* makes the Father known to men. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, *He hath declared Him*" (i. 18). "All things," saith our Lord, "that I have heard of My Father *I have made known unto you*" (xv. 15). Thus "Christ," it has been said, "is the expression of the mind of God."

The opening of St. John's Gospel reminds us in structure and style of the opening of the Book of Genesis. Moses takes us back to the beginning of the natural creation; but St. John speaks of a beginning that was before all creation—from everlasting. And as in the natural creation God said, "Let there

be light, and there was light ;" so Christ, the true Light, shone out in the spiritual darkness of the world, and the world comprehended it not (i. 5).

Of all the Evangelists, St. John alone makes use of the remarkable phrase which occurs twice in the first chapter of his Gospel, viz., "the only begotten Son of God" (vv. 14, 18), and in chapter iii. 16, 18, where our Lord applies the title to Himself.

Besides the doctrine of the Eternal Generation implied in this word, in the last verse of the prologue or introduction another most important doctrine is indirectly stated, viz., the Incarnation or coming of God in the flesh—that it was not by generation, but by miraculous conception. For the phrase is, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt" (tabernacled) "among us."

In chapter I, verse 17, St. John places the old and the new dispensation in contrast : "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ ;" thus declaring in effect the blessedness of the New Covenant, of which he was made a minister, to consist in this, that by it a man might be justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses.

In the several accounts by the Evangelists of the ministry of St. John the Baptist, his special testimony to the divinity of Christ is most fully recorded by St. John ; and it is interesting thus to trace all through his Gospel this setting forth of that Divine aspect of our Lord which (as we have said) he designed, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to illustrate.

The witness of the Great Forerunner to our Lord's essential Godhead is distinct and striking. He

declares His pre-existence (i. 15-30 ; iii. 31)—that he was the Son of God (i. 34)—His unmeasured supply of the Holy Spirit (iii. 34)—that He is “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (i. 29)—that to have faith in Him is everlasting life (iii. 36)—that He is Lord of all (iii. 35)—His union with the Church (iii. 29).

The narrative portion of the fourth Gospel begins with the ministry of John the Baptist (i. 19-37).

The object of his ministry, as the Herald or Fore-runner of the Messiah, was to prepare His way—to make ready a people for the Lord. Accordingly, in prosecution of this object, he announced the coming of the Messiah—he called the whole Jewish nation to repentance ; and as a type of that cleansing that they needed, he baptized in Jordan as many as confessed their sins and promised amendment of life. He pointed out the Messiah Himself to the people. “Behold the Lamb of God!” (the Lamb which God had “provided for Himself as a burnt-offering,” Gen. xxii. 8—the Lamb appointed to the slaughter, Isa. liiii. 7). And this truth had been revealed to him by God Himself ; for “He that sent me,” said the Baptist, “the same said unto me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He Which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost” (i. 33).

These were the features of his ministry, and what was its result ? Though great multitudes came to his baptism, they were chiefly from the humbler classes. No national repentance followed. The rulers did not believe in St. John the Baptist as a messenger or prophet of God ; nor did they allow the validity of his

baptism. They sent a deputation to him, to ask him by what authority he acted (ver. 19); but they never acknowledged that he possessed any; or that he was a messenger sent by God.

The nation, then, acting through its religious leaders and rulers who sat in Moses' seat, rejected the Baptist and his testimony. Would they be likely to accept Him of Whom the Baptist testified? and yet what mighty issues depended upon their decision.

And they were free to choose between the good and the evil, the blessing and the curse: for God's eternal purpose, in which Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, was unknown to them. Humanly speaking, God's wish was that His chosen people should receive and honour and obey His well-beloved Son; and to purify to Himself a holy and peculiar people, who should thus be made ready for His great gift, was the design of all His dealings with them, whether of mercy or of judgment.

Our Lord's temptation is not mentioned by St. John, probably because it had been already recorded by the first three Evangelists; and they, on the other hand, do not speak of the deputation of Priests and Levites from Jerusalem sent by the jealous religious rulers (the Sanhedrim probably) to interrogate the Baptist. If, however, they sought for ground of accusation against him they failed in their design; for John denied being either "the Christ," or "Elias," or "that prophet,"—that is, the Prophet spoken of by Moses whom God would raise up like unto Himself (Deut. xviii. 15-18).

The next day, while still baptizing at Bethabara (or rather Bethany, for such is the name in the oldest MSS.), John pointed out Jesus, now returning from his

temptation in the wilderness, as the "Lamb of God," "Which taketh away the sin of the world" (ver. 29).

The Baptist repeated his testimony the day following in the presence of two of his disciples; and they followed Jesus, and abode with Him until the tenth hour, or four in the afternoon, according to Jewish reckoning. One of these disciples was Andrew (ver. 40), and the other, it has always been supposed, was St. John the Apostle and Evangelist. Andrew immediately sought out his brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus; or probably (from ver. 41) we are to understand that "both disciples went together to seek Simon, but that Andrew found him first."¹

The next day Jesus set out for Galilee (ver. 43) with Simon and Andrew and John, who had all acknowledged Him as the Messiah, and, either before their departure or upon the way (as is most likely), our Lord called Philip of Bethsaida to follow Him, and Philip brought Nathanael (probably Bartholomew, or the son of Tolmai), a native of Cana in Galilee. Nathanael, overjoyed at finding "Him of Whom the prophets did write," and astonished at our Lord's miraculous knowledge, hailed Him at once as "the Son of God" and "the King of Israel" (ver. 49).

The third day, from the day we may suppose of the departure to Galilee, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee (see Note 1). Mary the mother of Jesus was there, and her anxiety about the failure of the wine (occasioned it is likely by the influx of more guests than had been expected), her desire to replenish it, resulting in her appeal to Jesus—"They have no wine," and her commands to the servants, make it pro-

¹ Alford.

bable that the wedding-feast was at the house of a relative, which indeed an ancient tradition affirms.

Mary's remark to Jesus, "They have no wine," (meaning, as some think, The wine is falling short—had we not better 'take leave—lest our host be placed in difficulty), seems so natural, that at first sight our Lord's reply—"Woman, what have I to do with thee?" (What is there in common between us?) "Mine hour is not yet come"—appears strange and harsh. But we must remember that the term 'woman' was with the Jews a title of respect, and the very one by which Jesus addressed his mother when, while hanging upon the Cross, He commended her to the care of the beloved disciple ; but, doubtless, the rest of the sentence is a gentle expostulation and reproof. Blessed as Mary was amongst women, she must not trench upon our Lord's own high prerogative. Requests are not to be made to the Divine Son through the human mother. Moreover, Jesus needed not that any should tell Him that of which He was already fully aware. He would act when the time for acting came, and for this a higher faith would have waited. His hour had not yet come.

Our Lord did nothing in haste. He ever waited with a divine patience for the appointed time. For thirty years he had been content to dwell in the obscurity of Nazareth, until the voice of his divinely-appointed herald warned Him that the time had come for Him to show Himself to Israel ; and so the time on any minor occasion must equally be left to Him. With us things often happen which are least expected ; but it was not so with Him Who knew the end from the beginning. In His working there

were no imperfections, inconsistencies or vacillation. Calm, grand, sublime, unlike the shiftings and changes of men, one solemn purpose ran through the whole of His earthly life and ministry.

That Mary was led by His manner to expect that in His own good time He would remember her request, is evident by her injunction to the servants, "Whatever He saith unto you, do it." Nor was she disappointed. In a little while six water-pots of stone, filled with the choicest wine (and containing from sixteen to twenty-four gallons each), were brought to the governor of the feast, and caused him to remark to the bridegroom that he had kept the best wine until last. (See Note 2.)

The working of Almighty power is no less surely present in all the processes of nature than in the miracle; but in the latter the veil that hides it is for a moment withdrawn, and men behold the hand of "the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, Who fainteth not, neither is weary."

And so Jesus manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him. There was, we may believe, a symbolical meaning, in this our Lord's first exercise of superhuman power, for "the first miracle of Moses," it has been remarked,¹ "was a turning of water into blood (Exod. vii. 20); and this had its fitness; for the law which came by Moses was a ministration of death, and working wrath (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9). But the first miracle of Christ was a turning of water into wine; this too a meet inauguration of all that should follow, for His was a ministration of life; He came, the dispenser of that true wine that maketh glad the heart of man (Ps. civ. 15)."

¹ Trench on the Miracles.

NOTES—LESSON II.

1. "*Cana of Galilee.*" The site of Cana is not absolutely known. Robinson contends for the modern Kândel-Jelîl, nine miles north of Nazareth. The traditional site is at Kefr Kenna, four and a half miles north-east of Nazareth. The former place is now generally accepted as the true one, but not universally so (see Rev. J. Zeller, *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, Oct. 1869), and it cannot be considered as settled.

2. "*From sixteen to twenty-four gallons each.*" A total probably of 120 gallons. Our Lord gave bountifully—as a King; and if so large a quantity was liable to be used in excess, the same may be urged against God's bounty in Nature—an abundant supply of grapes, or against the wine as the produce of the grape. God does not stint His hand because His good gifts are perverted by men to evil purposes. Amongst the Jews marriage festivities lasted six or seven days, and many guests were entertained.

3. Passages or words needing explanation:—

(a) "*Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*" (i. 13). This is the spiritual or new birth of water and of the Spirit spoken of by our Lord to Nicodemus (iii. 3-8).

(b) "*Grace for grace*" (i. 16); continual accessions of grace; one grace succeeding to and taking the place of another (see 2 Peter i. 5; Rom. v.).

(c) "*Art thou that prophet?*" (i. 21); the prophet whom Moses said God would raise up like unto Himself (see Deut. xviii. 15-18).

(d) "*And I knew Him not*" (i. 31); knew Him not with certainty, until the sign was given spoken of (ver. 33). John already recognised Jesus as one holier and greater than him-

self (Matt. iii. 14) ; but he could not be certain that He was the Messiah until he saw the Holy Ghost descending visibly upon Him.

(e) "*Thou shalt be called Cephas*" (ver. 42) ; signifying a stone in the Aramaic or vernacular Hebrew spoken by the Jews in the time of our Lord. Peter is the Greek form of the same word.

(f) "*Hereafter ye shall see,*" etc. (ver. 51). Christ is the spiritual ladder connecting earth and heaven.

The passage has been explained more at length as follows : "Jacob's vision was given him at a time when his position as the chosen 'seed' seemed most doubtful, the fulfilment of God's promise most unlikely. He was an exile, hated and threatened by his brother. The vision assured him of God's care of him, and the certainty of the promise. The hosts of heaven were on *his* side : what need he fear from man's opposition? Jesus had just been acknowledged as the Messiah, the promised King, the Head of the true Israel. But His brethren after the flesh would as a whole reject and desire to kill Him. How would the disciples' faith stand this? The same comfort and support which Jacob had had they should have also. They should have visible proof that *heaven* was on His side, even when things were at their worst. Every miracle, every heavenly voice, every vision of angelic attendants, would come under this promise; heaven was 'open' to them, and they would see on which side God was : 'angels were ascending and descending upon the Son of Man'; He was their care, because their Master."—*G. Warrington.*

LESSON III.

OUR LORD BEGINS HIS MINISTRY AT JERUSALEM—FIRST
CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE—CONVERSATION WITH
NICODEMUS—JESUS BAPTIZING IN JUDÆA—THE WOMAN
OF SAMARIA—HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON AT
CANA—MIRACLE AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA—OUR
LORD'S DEFENCE. (ii. 12—v. 1-47.)

THE Baptist had testified that Jesus was the Christ, the Lamb of God, in Whom the hopes of the nation should be fulfilled ; and now our Lord will shew Himself to His Covenant people, and give them proof of His Messiahship, both by His words and by His works. The truth of God and the power of God will be manifested in Him ; the one, by His doctrine and discourses ; the other, by such miracles as can be done only by the omnipotent hand of Him Who created all things.

In this way the Lord sought to convince the Jews that He was the Holy One of Whom the prophets spoke, and so gather the nation to Himself in penitence and faith. The whole ministry is but a record of our Lord's divine patience and forbearing love on the one hand, and the hatred and malignity of these blind guides on the other.

From Cana, where, as we have seen, our Lord first

manifested His glory, He went with His mother, brethren and disciples to Capernaum, and from thence to Jerusalem, that He might be present at the Feast of the Passover, which was always celebrated in the holy city in March or April.

Here, at Jerusalem, must His public ministry begin; and it did begin by that remarkable act, the purification of the Temple, which was at once a claim of divine authority and a rebuke to those who, for the sake of gain, had permitted the Court of the Lord's House to become a place of merchandise (ii. 12-16). Then, too, was fulfilled the great prophecy of Malachi (iii. 1-2), "The Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple; even the Messenger of the Covenant, Whom ye delight in. Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" And our Lord's holy wrath put the disciples in mind of the words of the Psalmist (lxix. 9), which mean, "Zeal for the honour of Thy house hath taken possession of my soul, consuming me with a burning desire to cleanse it of all that defiles." The authorities of the Temple quickly demanded of our Lord where the proof was of His divine commission (ii. 18); but He only answered them by a dark saying, to which the Jews, understanding it literally (not of His body but of the temple of stone), replied; "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it in three days?" (See Note 1.)

These Jews were not willing to see the truth, and so it would have been useless to put it plainly before them; but with Nicodemus, who was both a Pharisee and a ruler, our Lord acted differently. His coming

to Jesus secretly and at night shews that, even at the very commencement of our Lord's ministry, the rulers entertained a hostile feeling towards Him; and this ever deepened in intensity until their machinations ended in His judicial murder. Nicodemus had, at present, neither courage nor faith sufficient to brave all for the truth's sake; but he came, there is no doubt, with an honest desire for enlightenment: for our Lord at once unfolds to him the highest spiritual truths, and the whole plan of salvation—regeneration by water and the Spirit; Redemption by the Divine Son; and all springing from the love of the Father (iii. 1-21). Nicodemus would not, indeed, understand now how these things could be; and the profound mystery of the "lifting up" of the Son of Man could only be explained by the event;—then all would be made plain. He had come to the Light, and the light he had gained would shine more and more unto the perfect day; but the condemnation of the Pharisees and rulers generally was, that though the true Light was shining, "they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

When the sacred festival was over, Jesus left the holy city, and retired to some spot, we may suppose, on the banks of the Jordan; and here He began to baptize by the hands of His disciples, His object being to bring the Jews to repentance, not individually, but as a nation, that in their corporate capacity they might acknowledge their Messiah. From this baptism (though many of the humbler classes came to it) the spiritual heads and guides of the nation—the men who sat in Moses' seat and influenced public opinion—kept proudly aloof; and so at length, at the close of the

year, our Lord discontinued baptizing in Judæa, and withdrew into Galilee.

Our Lord and His disciples took the direct road through Samaria. In that long range of hills—a continuation of the loftier Lebanon—that runs through the Holy Land from north to south, midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan, there is one spot where it seems as if rent in twain by some convulsion of past ages. Into the narrow valley thus formed—between Ebal on the north and the more rugged Gerizim on the south—once poured the hosts of Israel, led by their great captain Joshua. Here, covering the valley, and rising rank above rank upon its sloping sides, they dedicated themselves to the Lord, and with a voice like the sound of many waters, solemnly vowed to serve Him and to obey His voice (Josh. xxiv.).

Here too, at the north-eastern base of Gerizim, was Jacob's well; but in our Lord's time the descendants of Jacob had long been rooted out of the land, while the children of strangers ("men from the great plain of the Euphrates," 2 Kings xvii. 24) were planted in it, and had dwelt in it for many a year. (See Note, Samaritans, Manual I. p. 31.)

It was about noon when our Lord, wearied as He was with walking and with the heat of the mid-day sun (which in that climate is oppressive even in December), rested on the well; and while He sat thus, as a weary traveller by the wayside, a Samaritan woman from the neighbouring town of Sychar (either the ancient Shechem, or a village near it), coming to draw water from the well, found Him Who was willing to give her "living water." The living water of which

our Lord spoke was, without doubt, the Holy Spirit (compare vii. 37-39). She had only to ask in faith to receive so great a gift—a gift that would never fail; for it would be in her “a well of water springing up to everlasting life.” And when this woman would know where and how to worship God, our Lord tells her, that they who worship Him must worship Him “in spirit and in truth.” Outward observances, however helpful to worship, are not themselves worship; and lip service is not prayer. The Holy of Holies is not in this place, nor in that, but within us, if the Holy Ghost dwells in our hearts; and prayer to be availing must be “in the spirit” (Eph. vi. 18).

Not only this woman, but “many more” of these Samaritans believed that Jesus was “indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (ver. 42), and their faith was the more remarkable, because (as the Evangelist tells us) “the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans,”—a deep and bitter hatred separating the two races. (See *Manual I.* Note 1, p. 31.)

Again, it is to be noted, that while the Jews required of our Lord “signs and wonders,” these Samaritans believed simply “because of His own word” (ver. 41). And such faith—faith grounded on His divine words or holy life—was what He chiefly valued; putting no trust in such as believed only “when they saw the miracles which He did” (see ii. 23, 24); and constantly refusing mere prodigies, or “signs from heaven,” to those who asked for such proofs of His Messiahship.

The miracles Jesus had wrought at Jerusalem gave Him that fame and favour on His return to Galilee which otherwise, “as a prophet in His own country,” He would hardly have had extended to Him. As it

was, the Galilæans "received Him" (iv. 44, 45); and at Cana, a "nobleman" (or person attached to the king's court; see Note 2) entreated Him to heal his son, who was at the point of death, at Capernaum" (iv. 46, 47).

This "nobleman" has by some been identified with the centurion whose servant was healed, as related by St. Matthew (viii. 5-13) and St Luke (vii. 1-10); but the two accounts, far from being different versions of the same miracle, stand out in marked contrast to each other in almost every particular. The centurion is an example of strong faith, the nobleman of a weak faith; the one believes that our Lord's word is sufficient, and that he is not worthy to receive Him under his roof, the other supposes that only His actual presence will avail; the one is commended as an example to the Jewish people, the other is gently rebuked for not believing except he should see "signs and wonders." And how differently does our Lord act in the two cases. "Here, being entreated to come, He does not, but sends His healing word; there, being asked to speak at a distance that word of healing, He rather proposes Himself to come; for here, as Chrysostom explains it well, a narrow and poor faith is enlarged and deepened; there a strong faith is crowned and rewarded. By not going He increases this nobleman's faith, by offering to go He brings out and honours that centurion's humility."^{*}

The scene changes once more to Jerusalem (chap. v.), whither Jesus has gone to a feast, or holy festival of the Jews. (See Note 3.)

There was in Jerusalem, at this time, a pool or bath, (the Pool of Bethesda, or House of Mercy), the waters

^{*} Trench.

of which were noted for their curative properties. The common belief of the Jewish people ascribed their virtue to an angel's intervention, and some early copyist, knowing this, seems to have inserted the fourth verse ; but we know from early MSS. that this verse was not written by St. John. The spring was probably what is called an intermittent spring.

One sabbath morning, in the colonnades or porches built around this place of public resort, there lay, as usual, a great number of people suffering from various disorders and infirmities, waiting for the "troubling of the waters," and amongst them was one sufferer, who for thirty-eight years had borne his infirmity, and was still waiting for the mercy of God. Many a time had the favourable opportunity for trying the waters of Bethesda been snatched from him by reason of the slowness of his movements. He has no human friend to give him a helping hand ; but who is this that now bends over him, asking in earnest tones, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Whoever He may be, to Him the sick man quickly explains the cause of his oft-repeated disappointment ; and then he hears the abrupt and startling command, "Take up thy bed and walk." He obeys (while the stranger passes on and is lost in the crowd), and with joyful step, scarce believing in his miraculously recovered powers, he hastens on through the streets of Jerusalem. But it is the sabbath-day, and "the Jews" (that is, the ecclesiastical rulers or Sanhedrists) tax him with breaking the sabbath by carrying his bed ; and when they discovered that it was Jesus Who had commanded him to do this thing, they "persecuted Him, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the sabbath day."

The remaining portion of the chapter (see vv. 17-47) is our Lord's answer to the accusations of the Sanhedrists, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (ver. 17). God never ceases from His work of sustaining the creatures of His hand, who otherwise would perish; while the material universe, if left to regulate itself, would speedily return to chaos; and whatsoever the Father doeth, that also is lawful to Me His Son. Their work is one as Their nature is one. "The Father raiseth up the dead," "the Son quickeneth whom He will." "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*" (vv. 19-23). "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, *making Himself equal with God.*"

It was not true that Jesus had broken the sabbath, but He plainly and boldly claimed to be "*the Son of God;*" not in that lower and general sense in which all men are God's sons, but in a sense altogether peculiar to Himself, as "*the Son,*" "the only begotten Son,"—implying a close personal relationship and identity of nature with the Father—a claim that in any mere man would have been clearly blasphemous.

And mark how He the accused becomes the accuser. "Ye have not His Word abiding in you"—"Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life"—"Ye have not the love of God in you"—"Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me."

In the promise to our first parents and to Abraham, in the prophecies of Jacob and Balaam, in types and sacrifices, in the Angel of the Divine Presence, Moses revealed the Messiah.

NOTES—LESSON III.

1. "*Forty and six years was this Temple in building*" (ii. 20). The restoration of the Temple was one of those magnificent works by which Herod (the Great) sought to win the good-will of his subjects and to dazzle other nations. Ten thousand men began the new structure B.C. 19 or 18; and when the incident occurred related by St. John (ii. 20), A.D. 27, the edifice with its cloisters had been growing in splendour for forty-six years, and was still receiving additional touches, although the sanctuary had been opened for service a year and a half after the foundations had been laid, and the cloisters after a period of eight years.

2. "*A nobleman.*" Supposed by some to be Chuza, Herod's steward, whose wife was afterwards one of the holy women who followed Jesus and ministered to Him. The original word, which is translated 'nobleman' in our English version of the New Testament, seems to mean one of the royal household. (See Schleussner).

3. "*After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem*" (v. 1). There has been much discussion about this nameless feast. And, in fact, the duration of our Lord's ministry—whether two and a quarter, or three and a quarter years—depends on the answer to the question, "Was it the Passover?" If it was the Passover—which seems most probable, seeing that it drew Jesus up to Jerusalem (comp. ii. 13), and that in the oldest MS. we have the article is inserted, "*the feast of the Jews,*"—then clearly we seem to have *four* Passovers distinctly mentioned in St. John's Gospel, viz. ii. 13, v. 1, vi. 4, xiii. 1, shewing that our Lord's ministry occupied *three* complete years beside the three months between the Baptism and the first of these Passovers.

There are two weighty objections to this view :—

1. That it obliges us to suppose that St. John passes over a whole year in silence between the end of his *fifth* and the commencement of his *sixth* chapter.

2. That in vii. 21, 23 our Lord alludes to His miracle at Bethesda as something quite fresh in the minds of all, which makes it difficult to suppose that eighteen months had intervened.

For these reasons Kepler suggested that the nameless feast of v. 1 might be the Feast of Purim, three weeks before the Passover. But why should our Lord grace a mere national holiday by His presence? Every commentator from Irenæus down to the time of Kepler believed it to be one of the three great Feasts. But if it be the Passover, and if the Passover of vi. 4 be the Passover of the year following, then how are the two above-mentioned objections to be met? All difficulty would be removed if we might transpose chapters v. and vi.; for then the Passover of vi. 4 and that of v. 1 would be one and the same. But for this transposition there is no authority.

LESSON IV.

CHRIST'S REJECTION BY THE RULERS—THE BREAD OF LIFE
—OUR LORD AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. (vi—viii.)

IN our last lesson we arrived at a very important stage in our Lord's public life; for it was nothing less than His emphatic rejection by the ecclesiastical rulers of the people.

Charged by them with profaning the sabbath, He boldly claimed to be the Messiah of the prophets, and the Son of God; and this He proved by the writings of Moses, by the Baptist's testimony, and by His own words and works. But this served only to increase their hostility, which henceforth made the city of David no safe abode for the Son of David.

The sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel takes us to a scene of our Lord's Galilæan ministry (the feeding of the five thousand) of which we have also accounts in three earlier Gospels (Matt. xiv. 13-21; Mark vi. 30-44); indeed, it is the only miracle recorded by all four Evangelists. (See Manual I. p. 41; II. p. 32.)

After the miracle, the disciples embark in the one only boat that was on the shore, leaving their Lord to dismiss the excited multitude.

In the storm our Lord is seen following them on the

waves, and no sooner has He entered the boat than they are at Capernaum.

The next morning other boats arrive at the scene of the miracle, and in them the people repair to Capernaum.

Amazed to find Jesus there, they asked Him how, without any boat, He had crossed the lake (ver. 25).

Jesus reproves them, knowing how little they cared for His miracles. It was for the loaves and fishes that they followed Him, and not for His word and doctrine—for temporal and not for spiritual benefits. It was that they might eat and be filled, and not because of His revelation of Divine power.

Our Lord bids them work not for the perishing bread only, but for the everlasting bread.

They ask what kind of work would earn the bread He alluded to.

Christ answers, Believe on Me, that I am sent from God, if ye wish to earn God's wages.

Prove that Thou art sent from God, they reply. Moses proved himself God's messenger by giving manna;—*that* was bread from heaven; the bread Thou gavest us yesterday was from *earth* only.

Christ answers, Neither was manna the true bread from heaven; nor was Moses the real giver of it. The true Bread of God is the Bread Which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world (ver. 33).

The people, like the woman of Samaria, still thinking of bodily things only, ask Christ to give them this wonderful bread of which He speaks.

"I am the Bread of Life."

This plain declaration that Christ "came down" from heaven offended them (ver. 41); and that *He*

could be in any sense bread seemed to them mere mockery.

Seeing this, our Lord repeats the hard saying again and again, making it each time harder, according to His own principle, "from him that hath not" (*i.e.* from him that hath no wish to have) taking away "even that he hath."

He vouchsafes, therefore, to these Jews no explanation, merely repeating "I am the Bread from Heaven." "He that eateth Me shall live for ever." "The bread I will give is My flesh."

Again they cavil, and again Jesus repeats the paradox, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

So ended the discussion. To His disciples, in private, Christ's tone is very different. They *too* had found it a hard saying, that He had come down from Heaven, and that His flesh was meat; and to them He vouchsafes the explanation He had withheld from the Jews.

Do you find it hard to believe that I came down from Heaven? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? Then ye will believe and understand that I came down from Heaven.

Then too (understanding My Divine Nature), ye will understand that it was of *that*—My *glorified spiritual* body¹—I spoke of just now; and not of My mere flesh, as you now behold it, which would profit you nothing if you were to eat it.

Thus did our Lord reveal to His Apostles that deep truth, which twelve months afterwards He taught them

¹ Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 45: "The last Adam became (after His Ascension) a quickening Spirit."

still more vividly in the institution of the Eucharist—that Christians were to draw all their strength and life from His glorified human nature.

We do not affirm that our Lord in this discourse was pointing to the Eucharist ; but we say that, both in this discourse, and in the subsequent institution of the Eucharist, our Lord pointed to that deep truth which underlies both the one and the other, namely that the Christian's spiritual life can only be sustained by communion with his ascended Lord.

Critical students of the New Testament have observed that there is a close connexion between the fifth and seventh chapters of St. John's Gospel.

In the fifth chapter we have the healing of the impotent man at Jerusalem on the sabbath-day, which so excited the anger of the rulers, that, as the opening of the seventh chapter informs us, Jesus could "not walk in Jewry" (Judæa) "because the Jews" (rulers) "sought to kill Him," and therefore He "walked in Galilee" (vii. 1), remaining there until the Feast of Tabernacles. In this seventh chapter the controversy of the fifth is resumed ; and our Lord's reference to the hostility of the rulers—their resolve to put Him to death—and to the case of the impotent man, all seem to indicate that the interval between the events of these two chapters was a short one ; and it has been suggested that St. John possibly added the sixth chapter after the completion of His Gospel, placing it in the position it now occupies.

St. John tells us that our Lord's brethren (see Note 1, p. 34, Manual II.) were not as yet believers in His Messiahship ; but, acknowledging His works as won-

derful, and knowing the high nature of His claims, they gave Him good advice, according to the maxims of worldly wisdom (vii. 3, 4). "Perform Thy mighty works, display Thy power, not here in this remote province, but before the priests and rulers at Jerusalem." The people would follow their spiritual guides, and thus our Lord's recognition by the whole nation would be secured. Our Lord replied, "I go not up to this feast;" but afterwards He went. This apparent contradiction has been explained in various ways, but the difficulty disappears if we suppose our Lord's meaning to be:—"I shall not go to this feast to manifest Myself as you say. The time for this is not yet come. At some future feast I shall do so." Or perhaps simply, "I go not up *now*," meaning to postpone His journey a few days.

Accordingly, a few days later, He went up privately, in secret, and not till the first days of the feast were over. Not until the following Passover (His time being come) did He shew Himself to the world as His brethren had suggested, riding into Jerusalem as Messiah and King, amid the shouts of the multitude.

The rulers, hoping to carry out their intention of putting our Lord to death, sought for Him in vain during the early days of the feast; and, supposing that He dared not be seen in Jerusalem, had ceased probably to watch for Him, when suddenly He appeared in the Temple and taught there. He, said our Lord, who doeth the will of God will understand the counsel of God (ver. 17); and then, referring to His condemnation because He had healed on the sabbath-day, He shewed the unfairness and hypocrisy of those who made the law of the sabbath yield to the law of circumcision,

and yet persecuted Him for making it give way to the still higher law of mercy and love (vv. 21-24). The people were divided in their opinion (ver. 43), but "many believed on Him;" and when the rulers heard these things, they sent officers to take Him, but they returned without effecting their purpose, and with the striking testimony, "Never man spake like this Man" (ver. 46).

It was the custom at this Feast of Tabernacles (see Note 1) to bring water from the Pool of Siloam and solemnly offer it to God in the Temple, in commemoration probably of the miraculous supply of water in the wilderness: and now, on the last great day of the festival, Jesus (Who was ever wont to draw illustrations from familiar customs or objects) proclaimed aloud to the multitude, who came up to the House of the Lord in solemn assembly, that great gift of the Holy Spirit—the "living water"—that He would give to all who should believe on Him.

The council of rulers, bent on His destruction, were greatly irritated at their failure to arrest this Galilæan, Who spoke so fearlessly, exposing their subterfuges, and setting up a standard of righteous judgment quite different from theirs. They angrily rejected the just and legal proposal of Nicodemus, and broke up, apparently, without being able to agree what course to adopt under these new and perplexing circumstances.

That the beautiful story of the woman taken in adultery, with which the eighth chapter of this Gospel opens, is to be received as a part of Holy Scripture, there is no reasonable doubt; but whether it is an original part of St. John's Gospel, or is rightly inserted

in this place, or does not more properly belong to St. Luke's Gospel, coming after his 21st chapter, where four of the MSS. place it, is very doubtful. Certainly none of the best MSS. insert it here.

The rest of this chapter (vv. 12-59) is taken up with our Lord's public discourses at the Feast of Tabernacles.

In the Treasury, in the most frequented of the Courts of the Temple, Jesus now stands forth as "the Light of the World" (ver. 12). And, speaking as man never spake,—as no mere man could possibly speak,—He declares His perfect union with the Father (vv. 16-18); and hence, the witness being two-fold, the condition of the Jewish law was fulfilled. His words reveal His true character more clearly than they have yet done:—"I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me." "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also." "I am from above;" and when they say unto Him, "Who art Thou?" He answers them, "When ye have lifted Me up" (crucified Me), "then shall ye know that I am He,"—the Messiah—the Anointed of God.

Many believed on Him as He spake these things (ver. 30), but others reviled Him, telling Him He was a Samaritan and had a devil (ver. 48); and when they heard Him declare yet more plainly His Divinity and pre-existence, they would stone Him on the spot as a blasphemer (vv. 50-59).

NOTES—LESSON IV.

1. "*The Feast of Tabernacles*," the third of the great feasts of Israel, commemorated the tent-life of the people in

the wilderness, and it was designed to be a season of holy joy and grateful remembrance of the past, and of trustful hope for the future. It was held in autumn after the vintage (Deut. xvi. 13), commencing on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and lasting seven days. During this week, the people were commanded to live in tabernacles, booths or tents, made of the branches of palms and other goodly trees, and raised upon the flat roof of their houses, in the Courts of the Temple, or upon any open and convenient space.

2. Passages needing explanation :—

(a) "*For Him hath God the Father sealed*" (vi. 27), that is, marked or avouched as His own.

(b) "*How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*" (vii. 15)—letters or learning; that is, a knowledge of the Scriptures, the chief branch of Jewish study. This does not imply that our Lord was brought up without any education; but He had never been instructed by any of the rabbis or learned men.

(c) "*When Christ cometh no man knoweth whence He is*" (ver. 27). The Jews knew that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, as we have seen (Manual I. p. 9), but probably from the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Who shall declare His generation?" (Isa. liii. 8) they supposed His parentage and origin would be a mystery.

(d) "*Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*" (ver. 38). This is a figurative expression for the heart or inner man. Compare this text with iv. 14.

(e) "*He shall never see death*" (viii. 51). Death shall be to him a translation merely.

(f) "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day*" (ver. 56). In those interviews with the Angel of Jehovah Abraham learned to know Christ in God; and he rejoiced to believe that one day the blessing thus vouchsafed to him would be shared by all the families of the earth through his Seed.

LESSON V.

THE HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND—THE GOOD
SHEPHERD—JESUS AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION—
THE RAISING OF LAZARUS. (ix—xi. 1-44.)

AT the Temple, or near to it, those who sought help from their fellow-men—cripples, the blind and other afflicted people—were wont to congregate in our Lord's time. Resting under the shadow of the sacred building, they awaited the alms of their more fortunate fellow-citizens, going to or returning from its solemn services. Here, probably, it was that Jesus, "as He passed by," saw one blind from his birth, whose life had, therefore, been one long night of total darkness.

Correcting the error of His disciples in supposing that special afflictions are always the consequences of special sins, Jesus anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay, and bade him wash it away in the waters of Siloam. (See Note 1.)

In unquestioning obedience he hastened to fulfil the command ; and as he washed in the pool, the glorious vision of earth and sky, city, Temple and tower, burst upon him, and the dark shadows of his long night were dispelled by the Sun of Righteousness. The Lord had said "Let there be light," and there was light.

How full of solemn teaching is this miracle—significant as it is of the spiritual illumination of the soul, and how suitable a work it was for Him Who had said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

The rulers hated the light, and were trying to extinguish it; therefore the Lord said, "I must work while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work" (ix. 4).

In a little while the man who had been born blind was brought before the council of rulers (probably the lesser Sanhedrim) because he had been healed on the sabbath-day. They hoped by working upon his fear—by threatening to put him out of the synagogue (see Note 2)—to use him as a tool, and turn his evidence against his Benefactor.

Upon this occasion there was a division amongst them. Some said this Man (Jesus) is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath-day; others asked "How a man that is a sinner could do such miracles?"

They appeal to the blind man: "What sayest *thou* of Him, in that He hath opened thine eyes?" and he answers "He is a prophet."

The hostile party will not believe that he had been born blind until his own parents affirm it; but by what means his eyes were opened his parents protest they know not. Let them ask their son, who is of an age to answer for himself.

Then, calling him again before them, they question him, and pretending to have discovered the imposture—"Now we *know* that this Man is a sinner"—they adjure him to give God glory by speaking the truth.

He had however spoken the truth, and he will adhere

to it. "Of what you say about this Man I know nothing; the one thing I do know is, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

This straightforward answer will not serve their purpose. It is not the answer they wish to elicit; so they ask him again, "How opened He thine eyes?"

But the poor man is not to be tampered with, and no tool of theirs will he consent to be. He is even losing patience with these hypocritical traducers of his Benefactor. Boldly he answers, "I have told you already, why will ye hear it again? will ye also be His disciples?"

Then they reviled him. "Thou art His disciple, we are Moses' disciples;" and, after hearing from him some sharp reproofs, they expelled him from the synagogue (vv. 16-34).

Cast out as evil by men, our Lord sought him. He had already given this blind beggar the gift of sight, and now He revealed Himself to him as "the Son of God" (v. 35-38).

The growth of this man's faith, his joyful acceptance of a Divine Redeemer, and his ready worship when he had found Him, are very instructive; and, finally, the whole narrative is summed up by our Lord in the solemn words:—"For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind" (ver. 39). Those whose blindness is not wilful, who desire the light, shall be made to see; those who hate the true light, but are wise in their own eyes and boast of their own light, will, as a judgment, be made blind. It was so with the Pharisees. Therefore, in answer to their angry question, "Are we blind also?" Jesus said to them, "If

ye were blind" (unwillingly so) "ye should have no sin ; but now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth."

Jesus denounced such spiritual guides as false shepherds, and declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd Who giveth His life for the sheep (x. 1-14). In Judæa shepherds and their flocks were seen on every hill-side, and such terms as the sheep-fold, with its stone wall, the wicket-gate or door, the porter or keeper of the door, would be readily understood. The Eastern shepherd calls his sheep by name, and they follow him, for they know his voice (see Note 3). He does not drive, but leads his sheep to pasture, tends them, and if need be lays down his life in defending them. The shepherd enters the fold by the door ; while the robber climbeth up some other way.

The Israelites were descended from shepherds, and were used, as we have seen, to shepherd-life. They knew that God's chosen people were sometimes spoken of under the image of a flock of sheep, their spiritual guides as shepherds, and the Messiah as the Chief Shepherd (Ezek. xxxiv. 23) ; but they did not fully enter into the import of Christ's words, and especially, the meaning of the door of the fold they failed to understand.

Then our Lord said plainly, "I am the door." All that ever came before Me" (pretending, that is, to be the true Shepherd or Messiah) "are thieves and robbers ;" and so likewise are all those false shepherds who refuse to enter the fold by Christ as the door.

What, however, was the effect of our Lord's words upon His hearers ? The haters of the light, and the despisers of His reproof, became only more blind and more malignant : "He hath a devil and is mad, why

listen to Him?" but His friends, appealing to His words and works, exclaimed, "These are not the words of one who hath a devil. Can one possessed by a devil open the eyes of the blind?" (vv. 19-21).

Again, at the Feast of Dedication (see Note 4), in the magnificent cloister of the Temple known as Solomon's Porch, our Lord still more plainly declared His Godhead. But the very people who had just asked Him to tell them plainly who He was (ver. 24), took up stones again to stone Him as a blasphemer (ver. 31); and so their hatred ever increased in proportion as He revealed to them more clearly His Divine Nature. "There is nothing," it has been said, "in human record so tragical, nothing so terrible, as St. John's description in these latter chapters of the ever-deepening hatred with which these Pharisees thirsted for the blood of that Holy One Who had appeared among them. His words, His very presence, testified against them that their works and hearts were evil."

Then our Lord left them in their perverseness; nor did He again appear amongst them, until He came to offer Himself as the appointed sacrifice, to let them work their will upon Him, and so fulfil what had been mysteriously foreordained in the counsels of the Almighty before the foundation of the world.

While Jesus tarried at Bethabara (or Bethany) beyond the Jordan a message was brought to Him from a village near Jerusalem also called Bethany. Its words were few, but full of meaning:—"He whom Thou lovest is sick" (xi. 3); and it came, not from strangers, but from friends; for Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus loved to minister to our Lord while He rested in their quiet home in the secluded

village of Bethany, upon the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives.

Jesus answered, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God;" and with these comforting words the messenger doubtless returned to the sorrowing sisters.

Though usually so prompt to go to those who needed His help, on this occasion our Lord lingered still, for some good reason, two days in Peræa. Then He said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judæa again" (ver. 7); but they would save Him from running so great a risk:—"Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?"

Their Divine Master would have them understand, however, that His enemies could not prevail against Him until their permitted time had come. "A man walks in the day without stumbling; so no harm can come to Me while My day lasts; and you will not stumble while you keep close to Me Who am the Light of the World."

The disciples mistook their Lord's meaning about the sleep of Lazarus, so He told them plainly their friend was dead, but that He would go to him; and Thomas expressed both his fidelity and his misgivings in the words, "Let us also go that we may die with Him" (vv. 11-16).

Arrived at Bethany, they found it even as Jesus had said, for Lazarus had been in his grave four days; so that, probably, he died the very day that the messenger was despatched to Jesus.

Through the dreary days that followed, the weeping sisters watched and waited for the coming of their Lord; and when at last they met Him, they could only

falter out their belief, that had He been with them their brother would not have died.

"Thy brother shall rise again;" "I am the Resurrection and the Life;" "He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die,"—death being no interruption to life in Christ. Such were the Divine words with which He comforted Martha and Mary.

Nevertheless, when He saw them weeping, and their friends also weeping who were with them, how truly He sympathized with their grief is recorded by St. John in those words of deepest pathos, "*Jesus wept!*" so that even the Jews exclaimed, "Behold how He loved him!"

Few words were spoken. When Jesus asked "Where have ye laid him?" they answered briefly, "Lord, come and see."

In a little while they stood around the rock-hewn tomb. What is our Lord's purpose in coming hither? Is it to weep with the sisters by the grave of him whom He esteemed, His "friend"? or is it to manifest the glory of God, and that the Son of God may be glorified thereby? If Martha and Mary had any trembling hope that Jesus would restore their brother to them, they failed to express it; unless we see it in Martha's "I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee:" but that seems hardly to have sprung from any settled conviction; for, in answer to her Lord's assurance, "Thy brother shall rise again," did she not say, with a kind of sigh, "I know that he will rise again *at the last day*"? Their grief, then, flowed on unchecked; for to their halting faith the resurrection of the last day seemed so far off and mysterious, that it gave them little comfort. They

knew that Lazarus would rise *then*, glorious as the angels ; but they so longed to have him beside them *now*; to feel the warm grasp of the brotherly hand ; to gaze once more in this life on the familiar face ; to see it again beside them, neither more beautiful nor less loving than it had ever been. They would have him with all his faults ; for would it not be a pleasure to bear with them ? and with all his infirmities ; for would it not be a happiness to minister to them ?

Our Lord's command to roll back the stone door of the tomb has been obeyed. The fears of the easily troubled Martha have been calmed by Christ's reassuring "Said I not unto thee?" and now they stand in trembling expectation of what their Lord will do. His prayer only broke the deep silence, as, lifting up His eyes, He thanked His Father for having heard Him ; and this was followed by the thrilling words, "Lazarus, come forth!" and lo ! in the sepulchre there was a sound of some one groping his way out of its gloomy recesses, and the body, that for four days had lain there, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, came forth, no longer a lifeless corpse but once more a living man (xi. 1-44).

NOTES—LESSON V.

1. "*The Pool of Siloam*" was a small deep reservoir in the valley, near the junction of the two valleys which almost girdle Jerusalem, due south of Mount Moriah, on which the Temple stood ; and its waters, flowing from a smaller basin in the rock a few feet higher up, were said to come from a living spring beneath the Temple. Its waters were used in

the Temple worship, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles. Its name signifies 'Sent,' and St. John seems to point to a symbolic meaning (ix. 7). The God-sent spring of water was to typify Christ, the 'Sent' from the Father.

2. "*Threatening to put him out of the synagogue.*" Three degrees of excommunication were in use amongst the Jews. By the first, the excommunicated person was expelled from the synagogue for thirty days, and this is supposed to be referred to in St. John ix. 22. Upon continued impenitence this term was prolonged, first to sixty and then to ninety days. By the third and severest kind of excommunication, pronounced in a solemn assembly or court, the offender was cut off from all communication with his fellow-men.

3. "*They follow his voice.*" A traveller once affirmed to an Eastern shepherd that the sheep knew him not by his voice but by his dress, which, however, the shepherd disputed; and, to settle the point, they exchanged dresses. The traveller, though wearing the dress of their keeper, called in vain to the sheep to follow him; but they came instantly at the voice of the real shepherd, although so strangely disguised. "They know not the voice of strangers" (x. 5).

4. "*The Feast of Dedication,*" held in December. It was one of the minor feasts of the Jews, instituted at the purification and re-dedication of the Temple (B.C. 164) after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes.

LESSON VI.

THE EFFECT OF THE MIRACLE AT BETHANY—OUR LORD'S
RETIREMENT AT EPHRAIM—THE ANOINTING AT BETH-
ANY—THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM—
DEPUTATION OF GENTILE PROSELYTES TO SEE JESUS—
OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE. (xi. 46-57, xii.)

THE raising of Lazarus, considered in our last lesson (although not recorded by the three earlier Evangelists, see Note 1), was the great and crowning miracle of our Lord's ministry; and its effect on both rulers and people was very great.

A miracle so stupendous, performed almost under the eyes of the ecclesiastical rulers of Jerusalem, and in presence of unfriendly and therefore unwilling witnesses, could not be gainsaid. If anything, therefore, could have overcome the prejudices and hostility of the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, and have led them to faith in Jesus as the Christ, this must have done so; but as they did not believe the testimony of Moses and the prophets (xi. 46, 47), so neither would they be convinced though one rose from the dead.

They could not, indeed, deny the reality of Lazarus's resurrection, for "many of the Jews" who saw it believed in the Lord, while others, in no friendly spirit we may

suppose, "went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done" (ver. 46); testifying no doubt to the reality of Lazarus's death and resurrection.

The rulers were now compelled to say, "This man doeth many miracles," and their question was, "What shall we do to put a stop to them? for if we let Him alone all men will believe on Him;" and in that case the result they looked for was that the Romans would come and take away their place,—their holy city and nation (vv. 47, 48).

Their object then was not truth and justice, but the adoption of a selfish and short-sighted policy. Although they had asked for signs, it was now evident that no possible miracle could convince them that Jesus was indeed the Christ; for the Christ they looked for was to be especially the vindicator of their national independence.

Such a Messiah as Jesus of Nazareth (Whom they took to be a man of humble origin, the friend of publicans and sinners, and whose disciples were fishermen and publicans) they despised. He might be possessed of miraculous powers, but these they had already ascribed to Satanic influence; and should He proclaim Himself King of the Jews, and assert His rights by aid of a deluded people, an insurrection against the Romans could only end in failure, and would draw down upon them the vengeance of their oppressors.

Under these circumstances, and with these views, they assembled in council to decide what means should be used to prevent such a catastrophe. Then it was that Caiaphas, being high priest that year (or the high priest of the year, see Note 2), rose up, and angrily

denouncing the more moderate measures of some members of the Sanhedrim, uttered those memorable words :—"Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people,"—which, though the expression of his own will, was at the same time a distinct prophecy of redemption by Christ—"an unconscious announcement of the atonement" (vv. 51, 52).

Accordingly, the council decreed that Jesus should die; and thus it came to pass that "the nation, in its highest council, presided over by the high priest, decided in the most solemn manner that the public safety demanded His death. All that now remained to be done was to determine how His death could be best effected."

It was no longer safe for our Lord either to tarry with His friends at Bethany or to show Himself at all in public, and He withdrew to the small retired town of Ephraim, in the mountainous district overlooking the Valley of the Jordan, and about sixteen Roman miles north-east of Jerusalem.

In this quiet seclusion He passed, probably, some six weeks in company with His disciples, preparing Himself by prayer and meditation and communion with God, for the solemn events of the approaching Passover.

Whither Jesus had gone was only known to the faithful few; for the people who went up to Jerusalem to prepare themselves for the holy festival by purification sought for Him there, and when they found Him not, their question was, "Will He not come to the feast?" (ver. 56.) They knew that He had attended the last two feasts, and that it was probable He would

be present at the important and divinely-instituted festival of the Passover, if He dared thus to place Himself in the power of His enemies. Our Lord meant to go up to this feast, and to deliver His Divine message with a distinctness which would as He foreknew precipitate the end.

All reason for concealment therefore was at an end, and instead of going up to the feast secretly, as on a former occasion, His object now was publicity; so, joining, we may suppose, the company of pilgrims on their way from Galilee to Jerusalem, our Lord came again to Bethany "six days before the Passover" (xii. 1).

Arriving there on the Friday, He took up His abode, probably, with Lazarus and his sisters, while the pilgrims to the feast continued their journey to Jerusalem.

It seems likely that it was on the next day (Saturday, the Jewish sabbath) that "they made Him a supper," at which Martha served and Lazarus was a guest (ver. 2); and from another Evangelist we learn that it took place at the house of Simon the leper. This meal was made for ever memorable by an incident connected with it.

As they sat at meat Mary paid her Lord a last act of homage. With quiet loving grace she brought forth an alabaster casket of very costly perfume; and breaking off the sealed top, she poured her offering upon His head (as St. Matthew tells us), and then anointed His feet (ver. 3).

Besides being a token of love and honour to her Lord—and besides refreshing Him with the coolness and fragrance of the lotion—this act of Mary had a peculiar significance.

It was usual to anoint the bodies of those who had died with fragrant lotions before interment; our Lord, therefore, at once connected the act with His approaching death.

But even while the fragrance filled the house, a murmur arose amongst the disciples, which the traitor Judas originated, and to which he gave utterance in the words that the spikenard ointment ought to have been "sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor;" not that he cared for the poor, but, as the Apostle tells us, because he was a thief and had the bag, and bare, or perhaps "appropriated," what was put therein (vv. 4-6).

From this we learn that our Lord and His Apostles had a common fund; that contributions were made to it; that the poor were succoured out of it; that Judas was the treasurer; and, finally, that, faithless to the trust reposed in him, this evil-minded and avaricious man robbed his Divine Master, his fellow disciples and the poor, to whose interests he pretended to be so keenly alive.

This anointing of our Lord is the same as that mentioned by St. Matthew (xxvi. 7) and St. Mark (xiv. 3), but differs entirely from the one recorded by St. Luke (vii. 37), which was considered in Manual III., p. 50.

It soon became known in Jerusalem that Jesus had arrived at Bethany,² and the Passover pilgrims, who had

² As Bethany was twice as far from Jerusalem as the lawful Sabbath day's journey of a thousand paces, it is probable that the stricter Jews went over to that place on Friday before sunset, and returned after the Sabbath was over. Sometimes in such cases a part of the journey only (if more convenient) was taken before the commencement of the Sabbath; and the rest of the way, if not exceeding the legal distance, could be walked upon that day.

come from distant parts, would hear for the first time the story of that greatest of our Lord's miracles, the raising of Lazarus. Many of them (we gather from St. John's narrative) gratified their curiosity by a visit to Bethany, where they saw not only Jesus but Lazarus—the Lord of Life and the man He had restored to life: and the result was that they “went away and believed on Jesus” (xi. 45).

Thus Lazarus, as a living witness to our Lord's power and glory, became an offence to the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, and they “consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death” (xii. 9-11).

St. John relates our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem more briefly than the other Evangelists, doubtless because it was a perfectly familiar story to those for whom he wrote.

He says that Jesus “when He had found a young ass sat thereon” (ver. 14); but the particulars of that finding he omits.

He tells us likewise that the people who went forth from Jerusalem to meet Him were people who had come to the feast; not inhabitants of the city therefore, but pilgrims from Galilee, Peræa and other parts.

It was amidst the rejoicings and hosannas of these strangers chiefly, we may suppose (bearing aloft, as emblems of victory branches of the kingly palm¹), that our Lord entered Jerusalem on that memorable first day of the week; while the chief priests and Pharisees looked on, exclaiming in angry scorn “Behold the world is gone after Him” (vv. 12-19).

¹ Strictly speaking, not branches, but leaves or fronds; as the palms being endogenous trees (increasing by internal growth) are therefore unbranched.

St. John alone mentions that "certain Greeks,"² who had "come up to worship at the feast," desired to see Jesus (vv. 20, 21).

Whether their wish (for a private interview apparently) was gratified is not certain, but our Lord's discourse to which it gave rise (vv. 23-36) was probably spoken in their presence.

Everything that is recorded of these solemn days of Passion Week has a peculiar significance, and the deputation of Gentile proselytes was not without its distinctive meaning.

It was a sign of our Lord's glorification amongst the Gentiles—a sign, therefore, of His approaching death, for His death was necessary to that glorification. But our Lord proceeded to show that the law of self-sacrifice is not for Himself alone but for all His people. "He that loveth his life" (pampering and indulging it) "shall lose it; and he that hateth his life" (the carnal life of self-indulgence) "shall attain to life eternal" (ver. 25).

The deep distress and trouble that suddenly took possession of our Lord's human soul, and which found expression in the words "Now is My soul troubled" (ver. 27), were a foretaste of that deeper agony of Gethsemane which is so solemnly recorded by the three earlier Evangelists; the same amazement, the same cry for deliverance, "Father, save me from this hour," the same resignation to His Father's will, "for this cause came I," strike us with awe and astonishment, but those who stood by were startled by a voice from heaven in answer to the prayer of the Divine Son.

² Meaning, perhaps, not necessarily Greeks, but merely Gentiles—proselytes who had come to the festival.

The Jews, who had so resisted all proofs of our Lord's Messiahship, were now shut up in that judicial blindness which is ever the consequence and punishment of such a hardening of the heart (vv. 37-41).

Nevertheless, many even of the rulers believed on Him; but the fear of men and the love of their praise kept them back from an open confession of Him as the Christ (vv. 42, 43).

NOTES—LESSON VI.

1. "*The raising of Lazarus, although not recorded by the three earlier Evangelists.*" Their mysterious silence on this, the most noteworthy of our Lord's miracles, is remarkable; but a very probable reason has been suggested for this otherwise unaccountable omission.

The peace, comfort and even safety of the family at Bethany, made it most undesirable that great publicity should be given to the miracle during their lifetime. As it was, St. John tells us that the rulers sought to take the life of Lazarus because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus (xii. 10, 11).

When the aged Apostle St. John wrote, some sixty years after the event, these motives for silence no longer existed; and he would naturally leave on record, for the benefit of the Church in all ages, an account of that surprising resurrection-miracle regarding which his fellow Evangelists had shown so prudent a reserve.

2. "*Being high priest that year*" (or "the high-priest of the year" (John xi. 49). This was a derisive title given by the Jews to the high-priests appointed by the Roman Governor, who, after the deposition of the legitimate high-priest, succeeded each other in quick succession, but seldom remained in office more than about a year. The legitimate high-priest was still esteemed the true one by the orthodox party.

LESSON VII.

THE PASCHAL MEAL—JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES—HE DENOUNCES THE TRAITOR—THE SECRET SIGN—JUDAS TAKES HIS DEPARTURE—OUR LORD COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES. (xiii.)

IT was on the evening of the 14th Nisan (see Note 1) that our Lord and His Apostles prepared to eat their last Paschal meal together. They had walked from Bethany, and doubtless before beginning such a sacred feast it would be in accordance with Jewish feelings that their feet, protected only by open sandals, should be cleansed from the dust of the road. It was customary for a servant or slave to perform this necessary ablution, but as, on this occasion, there was no one present in such a capacity, the feet-washing must either be omitted or be undertaken by one of the company.

The Apostles, who were ever disputing who amongst them should be the greatest, shrunk back, we may suppose, from so lowly an office; but how was their pride rebuked when they saw their Lord rise from the table (where all was now ready¹), lay aside His loose upper garment, and, pouring water into a basin, begin

¹ The words of our version "And supper being ended," should be rather "Supper having been served."

to wash His disciples' feet and dry them with the towel He had bound around Him!

In abashed silence they submit themselves to His will, until St. Peter exclaims, in questioning surprise, "Lord, dost *Thou* wash *my* feet!"

That the Son of God should lay aside His glory and take upon Himself the form of a servant was indeed marvellous; but for the present He required Peter's submission, promising to explain by and by the meaning of what He did.

But Peter, mistaking his own self-will for humility, only protests the more vehemently, "Lord, Thou shalt never wash *my* feet!"

"If I wash thee not thou hast no part in Me."

Thus solemnly warned by Christ, Peter entreats his Lord to wash not only his feet, but also his hands and his head.

Then our Lord explains more fully the spiritual meaning of His act.

He that has been washed (or *bathed* as the word implies)—he whom I have once cleansed from sin—needeth not save to wash his feet; needeth but to seek daily cleansing from daily sins;¹ "and ye are clean but not all." Judas had never received this cleansing.

Seated (or reclining) again at the table, Jesus explained that, besides the spiritual import of this feet-washing, He intended it as a lesson of humility and love (vv. 14-17).

Speaking of the treachery of one of the Twelve, our Lord showed how the words of Psalm xli. 9 (though

¹ This washing (literally *bath* or *laver*) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost (or daily cleansing) is alluded to by St. Paul. See Titus iii. 5, and the Collect for Christmas Day.

applying primarily to Ahithophel, David's counsellor) were a prophecy of His own betrayal (ver. 18).

And He told His disciples how fully He understood the dark designs of the faithless one amongst them. "Now I tell you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye may believe" (ver. 19).

The interest deepens, and the whole scene rises vividly before us, as we read how our Lord "was troubled in spirit," when, with visible signs of emotion, He still more plainly denounced one of His assembled Apostles as the traitor. "Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray Me!"

Then, at last, they take alarm, looking at one another in doubt, perplexity and dismay (ver. 22). Their Lord's words are no longer dark sayings, but plain and unmistakeable: "*One of you.*" Knowing so much they would fain know more. They cannot rest under the imputation, and (as St. Matthew tells us) each true-hearted disciple exclaims, in conscious innocence, "Lord, is it I?"

The very places of our Lord, and at least three of His disciples, may be conjectured from St. John's narrative. All were reclining on the left elbow, as was customary with the Jews at meal-time. John, the beloved disciple, was leaning on Jesus' bosom,—that is, he occupied the next place to Jesus; so that, in leaning back to speak to Him, his head would almost touch the breast of our Lord. Judas, it would seem, was also very near our Lord, for when he said, "Lord, is it I?" and Christ replied "Yes," the rest of the disciples appear not to have heard the question or answer (see ver. 28). Peter, perhaps, faced John, and so was able to beckon to him when, in that gesture, his great desire to ascertain the name of the traitor found expression.

Then John, understanding the sign, asked, as he leant back on Jesus' breast, "Who is it, Lord?" and Jesus answered, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it;" and after He had dipped the sop of unleavened bread with bitter herbs, He gave it to Judas Iscariot (ver. 26).

Satan had put it into his heart (as St. John tells us, ver. 2) to betray his Master, and he had made his bargain with the chief priests; but up to this point he had not, we may suppose, entirely resigned himself to the will of the wicked one. The giving of the sop may have been (as some have thought) our Lord's last appeal to him. It was his last opportunity of return, and he threw it away. He hardened his heart, and henceforth he was possessed of a devil, for we read the awful words that "after the sop Satan entered into him" (ver. 27).

Our Lord knew it, and desired that he should no longer remain in His presence. His infinite purity shrunk from further contact with the polluted and reprobate disciple. Hence His command, "What thou doest do quickly" (ver. 27). "I not merely suffer it: I command thee to do it quickly now. Thou willest it; I also will it. Get thee hence."¹

He obeys; for "having received the sop he went immediately out," though the disciples know not why he goes or whither. Some of them suppose it is to buy things for the feast that begins on the morrow, or that perchance Jesus has sent him forth on some errand of mercy to the poor; but far different is his purpose, as he hastens on through the night to prepare his plans in concert with the chief priests and Pharisees.

¹ Stier.

Within the chamber (as we learn from the other Gospels) Jesus instituted His holy Supper (see Note 2); which, when St. John wrote, was known and observed wherever a Christian congregation met for Christian worship; and St. John, without alluding directly to its institution (well known to all his readers) passes on to our Lord's last discourse, which the Holy Spirit brings back to his remembrance, to be the consolation of the Church in all countries and in all ages until her Lord's coming again.

The sound of Judas' retreating footsteps has died away, and there is nothing now to mar the peace or disturb the harmony of our Lord and His chosen ones; and He will gently prepare them for the bitter hours of trial through which they must shortly pass.

By the Cross of shame, by His Death and Passion, He would be glorified, and God would be glorified in Him; for thereby the infinite love of the Father and the infinite compassion of the Divine Son will be manifested (vv. 31, 33).

And the new commandment of love—new because of a higher kind than before, "as I have loved you,"—is to bind together the disciples of a crucified Saviour. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," if ye have love one to another (vv. 34, 35). Instead of claiming an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, His disciples are to return good for evil—to bless their enemies and to pray for them. Love, not compensation, is to be the law of His spiritual Kingdom.

The "hour" for which our Lord had been gradually preparing the minds of His disciples was now close at hand. He who had "come from God" to redeem the world will accomplish this mighty work and return to

God; but "having loved His own which were in the world" He will love them unto the end; and to them He must yet speak words of comfort, telling them how expedient it is that His bodily presence be withdrawn from them, that He may return to them and be in them by the Spirit.

He must be withdrawn from them externally that He may return to them internally. Returning internally He will be a new principle of Life to all who receive Him; and they will have communion with God through Him Who by the sacrifice of Himself becomes the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The disciples had been troubled by their Lord's words "Whither I go ye cannot come" (xiii. 33); so now He begins to comfort them.

They shall follow Him hereafter (ver. 36).

Meanwhile He will be continually returning to them in the Person of the Holy Ghost, to prepare them for that final reunion.

This latter ground of consolation, and also Christ's vital union with His people, are set forth in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of St. John's Gospel, which we reserve for consideration in our next Lesson.

NOTES—LESSON VII.

1. "*It was on the evening of the 14th Nisan that our Lord and His Apostles prepared to eat their last Paschal meal together.*" It has been much disputed whether our Lord ate the Paschal Supper with His disciples at the usual time, namely on the evening of the 14th Nisan, as appears to be plainly indicated by the three earlier Evangelists (Matt. xxvi 17-19; Mark xiv. 12-14; and Luke xxii. 7, 11, 13), or

whether He anticipated the usual time by partaking of it after the sunset of the 13th instead of the close of the 14th day of the month, as might be supposed from St. John's statements (xiii. 1, 29, xviii. 28, 39, xix. 14). We must admit that there is some difficulty in reconciling the three earlier Gospels with St. John's.

The three earlier Gospels appear to assert distinctly that the last Supper was on the evening when all the Jews ate their Paschal Supper. St. Luke's words are as clear as words can be. "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed." So St. Mark speaks of it as "the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover." But St. John speaks of the Jews being unwilling to enter the Roman Court *on Friday*, lest they should pollute themselves, and so be unable "to eat the Passover," which, at first, seems to imply that the Paschal Lamb was still to be eaten, and that Friday (not Thursday) was that year the 14th Nisan.

But remembering that St. John's phrase "Eat the Passover" may mean join in the daily feast, which lasted all through the Passover week, it seems easier to bring St. John into harmony with the three earlier Gospels, than to explain away their clear assertion that our Lord's last Supper was the Paschal Meal.

The best commentators are about equally divided on the question ; some saying our Lord ate a true Paschal supper on the 14th, and was crucified on the 15th Nisan ; others saying that our Lord was crucified on the 14th at the very hour when the Paschal lamb was slain.

2. "*His holy Supper.*" Another matter upon which commentators are not agreed is whether Judas partook of the Lord's Supper with the Eleven.

Most of the Fathers supposed him to have done so ; but this view is now very generally rejected, and most modern scholars suppose him to have left previous to its institution.

LESSON VIII.

OUR LORD'S LAST DISCOURSES WITH HIS DISCIPLES. (xiv. xv.)

WE have said (Lesson VII.) that our Lord's immediate object in His farewell discourses was to comfort His disciples and to prepare them for the loss of His bodily presence by the promise of an even more blessed and effectual spiritual presence.

His disciples were henceforth to be strangers and pilgrims upon the earth; to be persecuted, and brought before kings and rulers, to be afflicted and tormented; but He says: "Let not your heart be troubled."

First, then, He comforts them by pointing to their heavenly inheritance, and He will come again to receive them unto Himself (xiv. 2, 3).

This is one ground of comfort; and another is that *meanwhile* He will prepare them for this future blessedness by coming to them in another way—inwardly and spiritually. Thus "as He prepares the place for them, He will also prepare them for the place. He will constantly come back to them by His Spirit."

Returning to His departure, our Lord says: "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know" (ver. 4).

The disciples must surely know *whither* their Lord is going, for had He not just spoken of His Father's

House with the many mansions? and did He not say I go (there) to prepare a place for you?

Yet Thomas objects, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?"

Making no direct answer to the first objection our Lord replies to the second, "I am the Way" (ver. 6); through Me only can ye come unto the Father. And because I am the Way I am also the Truth; and as those who walk in that way derive all their nourishment from Me I am the Life.

Our Lord's last words, "*And have seen Him*" (ver. 7), astonish Philip, who exclaims, "Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us" (ver. 8).

Philip's question need not imply that he doubted his Lord's divinity; but he failed to understand His perfect Oneness with the Father.

This great truth Jesus now impresses on His listening disciples. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (ver. 9). The Father reveals Himself in His well-beloved Son.

Again our Lord says:—"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name that will I do" (ver. 13). Here also He speaks as God.

He promises another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, to dwell with them and be in them. "I will not leave you comfortless"—or *orphans*, as it is in the margin of our Bibles—"I will come to you" (ver. 18). He (Christ) comes when the Comforter comes. The coming of the Spirit was, in truth, not so much in order to supply His place when absent, as to make Him present in a nearer and more blessed way. •

So, in the next verse, Jesus says: Though the world will see Me not after My departure, ye shall see Me;

and as He had before assured them that He is the Life He now again repeats the same truth in the promise: "Because I live ye shall live also" (ver. 19), "and in that day ye shall know that ye are in communion with Me, and therefore in communion with the Father" (ver. 20). His people are those who love Him and who prove their love by their obedience; and the promise is, "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love Him and will manifest Myself to him" (ver. 21).

In answer to the question of Judas (or Lebbæus as St. Matthew calls him, x. 3) our Lord repeats what He had already said (ver. 21), but He adds: "*We* will come to Him." "*We*," the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost. All come, and all abide (ver. 23). But "on the other hand, they who, loving Me not, do not keep My saying, will be shut out as well from My Father's love as from Mine; since the word which ye hear from Me is not Mine only, but My Father's also, Who sent Me."

The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, shall teach the Apostles all spiritual knowledge after their Lord's departure, and bring to their remembrance His words, but His peace He *leaves* with them (ver. 27). Moreover, Christ's going away (the withdrawing of His bodily presence) is itself a coming again to them, for it is a passing into that unseen life in which He is close to us. His going is likewise a resuming of the glory He had with the Father before the world was. He Who during His sojourn upon earth was inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood, goes back to the Father, Who in His glory is greater than the Son in His humiliation; and our Lord adds, in words of

mingled encouragement and reproof, that if His disciples loved Him they would rejoice in His return to glory (ver. 28).

But our Lord warns His disciples that before this return to glory He will have a last conflict with Satan, "the prince of this world," who, after his temptations in the wilderness, departed from the Holy One "for a season;" and he comes again, not as then with temptations that appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life; but to affright Him with an horrible dread—to appal by the terrors of that tempest which would break upon the righteous soul of the Son of God when He should make Himself a sacrifice for sin.

He "is (said our Lord) already near, and has nothing (can find nothing) that belongs to him in Me;" or the words may mean, "hath no power over Me;" yet I submit to his malice, that the world may know that I love the Father and obey His commands (vv. 30, 31).

In the beautiful allegory of the Vine and its branches (xv.) our Lord sets forth, in the most vivid manner, His spiritual union with His Church.

As the vine and its branches are one tree, so Christ and His people are truly one. A branch severed from the tree dies; but if a branch abides in the tree the sap from the stem flows into it, and being nourished, it brings forth fruit. In like manner all who abide in Christ draw their spiritual life from Him and bring forth fruit to the glory of God.

To the Jews the vine was a symbol of their national and religious life. Judæa was the land of the vine. On its hill-sides and tablelands vineyards, with their walls and watchtowers, were everywhere seen; and

here was the Valley of Eschol, from whence the spies tore that goodly cluster of grapes which two men carried between them upon a staff. As the emblem of the nation an enormous cluster of golden grapes glittered at the entrance to the Temple, while the same device was seen upon the coins of the Maccabees and upon the tombstones of the Jewish people.

Such a simile was therefore well calculated to arrest the attention of the Jew. The vine is, moreover, the most perfect production of the vegetable kingdom. The elegance of its leaves, the fragrance of its blossoms, the beauty and excellence of its fruit, its many uses, the nourishment that men derive from it, make the vine a fitting symbol of Him Who is altogether lovely.

"I am the true Vine." To understand our Lord's meaning we must bear in mind that the Jewish Church and people had been spoken of continually in the Old Testament as a vine and a vineyard. "The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant" (Isa. v. 7). The chosen nation was brought as a vine out of Egypt and planted in the land from which the heathen had been cast out (Psa. lxxx. 8); but when the Lord looked for the fruit of righteousness He beheld only wickedness and oppression (Isa. v. 7). The vine proved to be but the vine of Sodom, whose grapes were as gall for bitterness. "Their wine is the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps" (Deut. xxxii. 33).

This vine, then, did not fulfil its promise; it was not the *true* vine (see Note). Christ is the *true* or *perfect* Vine, bringing forth the perfect fruit which the degenerate vine of Israel failed to bear.

And the "Father is the husbandman." He planted the true Vine, for it was He Who sent forth His Son and prepared a body for Him, and the divine Son, when He took our nature, was visited with affliction like those whom He called His brethren.

All likewise who are baptized into Christ—grafted into the true Vine—are also partakers of this spiritual husbandry; for, while the barren branches are taken away, the fruit-bearing branches are "purged"—pruned or cleansed—that they may be more fruitful; and so God's people are an afflicted people; their afflictions being meant to chasten them.

His people are indeed "clean." They are already justified, and sanctification will certainly follow if they abide in Christ (xv. 3, 4); for without Him they can do nothing. Even after they are in Christ, they can only bear much fruit by drawing all their spiritual life and strength from Him, even as the branches of the vine bear fruit only because the sap of the tree flows into them. So "Christ in us" is the Christian's motto; and it is by bearing much fruit that the Father is glorified. As Christ hath loved His people so must they continue in His love, and the proof of love is obedience (vv. 9, 10). Then their joy will be full, for then Christ will impart His own joy to them (ver. 11).

Our Lord reiterates His command that His disciples should love one another, even as He had loved them (ver. 12), and St. John tell us in one of his letters that Christ's love is to be the pattern of ours (see 1 John iii. 16).

Closer and closer the Saviour draws His disciples to Him in this last hour of sacred intercourse, treating them not as servants, to whom mere commands are to

be given, but as "friends" (ver. 14), and as friends He holds the most intimate converse with them (vv. 13-15).

All this is due to the unmerited love of Christ, Who chose His people of free grace long before they learned to choose Him (ver. 16). He has appointed them to bring forth fruit; and to all who do so a promise is given, not as the reward of merit, but because such fruit is an evidence of vital union with Christ (ver. 5). Further, His disciples are to be prepared for the hatred of the world. The servant cannot expect to fare better than his Lord; and the hatred of the world both towards Christ and towards His disciples springs from hatred to God (vv. 18-24).

But, as if again to comfort them in view of such opposition and persecution, our Lord repeats His promise of the Comforter, Whose office it would be to testify of Him (vv. 26-27).

NOTE—LESSON VIII.

"*The true Vine.*" In the Greek language, the two words used for true, *Alathes* and *Alathinos*, represent two ideas that are wholly distinct, namely, the true as opposed to the false, and the true as distinguished from the typical and imperfect.

Formerly this distinction was preserved in our language; the true as opposed to the false being expressed by the word *true*, and the true as distinguished from the imperfect by the word "*very*;" as for example in the "very God of very God" of the Nicene Creed; and in Wicliffe's Bible we read, "I am the *verri* vine."

Our Lord was the *true* Vine in this latter sense. He is the true or *perfect* Vine as distinguished from the imperfect or typical vine, which was seen in the Jewish Church and nation.

LESSON IX.

OUR LORD'S FINAL DISCOURSE AND PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE. (xvi. xvii.)

IN the sixteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel we have the remaining portion of our Lord's last conversation with His Apostles before He suffered.

He tells them beforehand of the world's persecution, lest coming unexpectedly it should offend them,—causing them to stumble and lose their faith in Him (xvi. 1); and they are now to understand how severe the persecution is to be (ver. 2).

But they would remember for their comfort that He had told them of these trials and had promised them the help and presence of the Divine Spirit.

He had not told them of these troubles prematurely, but now they must be warned of them, for "I go" (their Lord reminds them) "to Him that sent Me" (vv. 4, 5).

And so now, in the course of Divine Providence, afflictions, bereavements and crosses are hidden from us as long as the knowledge of them would only perplex and trouble us.

The disciples are too much cast down to inquire about that other world to which their Lord is going and the place He will prepare for them in His Father's House. Their thoughts are still occupied with the

interests of the present life; they do not yet count all things loss but the knowledge of Christ Jesus; and their Lord's departure discourages them: their hearts are filled with sorrow (xvi. 5, 6).

Nevertheless, He says, "It is expedient for you that I go away," and why? Because His departure,—the withdrawing of His bodily presence, is the condition necessary to that coming of the Comforter which He had promised (vv. 7, 8).

"And when He comes He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment" (ver. 8).

He will convince men, first, of the sin of not believing in Christ; and has not the unchristian world presented a contrast to the Christian world ever since the Christian era, that even unbelievers must be struck by?

He will likewise convince the world's conscience of true righteousness; that is, in the first place, of Christ's righteousness (which the Holy Spirit would manifest in the hearts of men as their righteousness)—that justifying righteousness which Christ wrought for us, and for the sake of which we are accounted righteous before God by faith; and it is by His departure—by His going to the Father—that He is shown to be the Son of God, the Righteous One. This righteousness is besides the righteousness wrought *in us* by the Spirit. Christ would say, "By going to My Father, and passing into My hidden, unseen, life, I shall be able far more effectually than now to work that righteousness within you."

"And of judgment," for by My resurrection the prince of this world will be defeated and cast down. I shall be slain by his malice; but by My resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God confusion will

be poured upon the powers of darkness; and the final triumph of good—the total destruction of the kingdom of evil—will thereby be assured to God's people.

Many more things our Lord would fain tell His disciples; but they "cannot bear them now," for these higher revelations would altogether transcend their present faith and understanding. "Howbeit" (our Lord adds for their comfort) "when He the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth." He will first enlighten their understandings and then show them things to come—the history of the Church in prophetic outline until Christ's coming again. He will comfort and strengthen them, and reveal to them the things of Christ; and this explains how it is that Christ seems throughout to speak of Himself and the Holy Ghost interchangeably.

But if we would find the master key to the enigmatical language of the whole discourse we must ascertain the meaning of our Lord's startling paradox, "Ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father," (ver. 16); and it appears to be this:—that when Christ speaks of "leaving the world" and "going to the Father" He means going out of the *external* into the *internal*—*giving up one manner of life and entering on another*; and that in this internal life He will be as present with them as ever, and far more powerfully present with them; and they shall "see" Him with the spiritual sight of faith.

For the Apostles indeed a time of sorrow—a time of weeping and mourning—was now close at hand in their Lord's suffering and death. But on the day of resurrection, and more especially when He would return to them by the Spirit, they will have no need any longer to ask questions, as at the present time, for the

Spirit will so clearly reveal to them the things of Christ, that what is now dark and mysterious and beyond their unassisted understandings, will be so no more; and a very gracious promise is added, namely, that whatsoever they shall ask the Father in prayer in His Son's name the Father will give them (see Note 1), for in that day the all-prevailing sacrifice, which was to open free access to the Father, would have been made and accepted; and with such a promise, Christians, in all ages, may come boldly to the throne of grace.

And lest it should be supposed that the Father's love is confined to the divine Son and does not extend to the sinner, our Lord makes the gracious declaration, "The Father Himself loveth you" (ver. 27).

Our Lord, moreover, plainly affirms His own pre-existence (ver. 28); thus confirming St. John's testimony at the opening of this Gospel (i. 1), and the disciples express their earnest belief of this great truth (ver. 30).

Yet they are warned how soon their hearts would fail them; and with one more word of warning and encouragement—"in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer I have overcome the world" (ver. 33)—our Lord closes this great and memorable discourse.

The beloved Apostle, who, after the lapse of many years, recorded our Lord's last words of comfort and exhortation, has likewise given us, in all its marvellous simplicity and sublimity, (as it was brought back to his remembrance by the Holy Spirit) Christ's last prayer with and for His disciples.

Pondering the truths that had just fallen from His lips, the Apostles still stand around their Lord (see

Note 2) while He commends them to the Father, Who had long before given them to the divine Son as the first-fruits of His mighty work of redemption. He was about to be stricken for their sakes and for ours. The night of agony, and the day of insult and suffering were close at hand; the disciples were now to be scattered every man to his own home, while their divine Master, knowing that His hour is come, calmly surrendered Himself into the hands of His enemies.

But before He walks forth to the place to which Judas purposes to bring his band of soldiers to seize Him whose disciple and apostle he had been, Jesus, "lifting up His eyes to heaven," entreats the Father to glorify Him the divine Son (xvii. 1).

And it is by His death and passion that both He and the Father will be glorified; for by it alone could God's kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven: and by it alone could our Lord bring many sons unto glory and be crowned as the Messiah. Both His kingly power over all flesh as the Messiah and the giving eternal life to as many as God had given Him, are consequent upon His work and redemption; and in accomplishing this He glorified the Father in the earth (vv. 2, 3).

Our Lord likewise prays the Father to glorify His human nature with the glory He had with Him before the world was—before anything was created;—and thus does He again bear witness to His eternal God-head (vv. 5, 6).

And, albeit, His disciples' faith and knowledge are as yet defective (and must be so till the Holy Spirit should strengthen the one and perfect the other)—although He knew that in a little while all would leave

Him to seek their own safety; that Peter would deny Him and Thomas would doubt His word—He declared them to have received His words and to know surely that He came out from God.

Then His intercessory prayer for them (and for all who through their word should believe) begins with the words, "I pray for them (ver. 9) for they are Thine"—God's elect whom He has given to the Son. He is about to leave them. "I am no more in the world;" but these are in the world; and because they are Christ's the malice of Satan will be directed against them; and our Lord's prayer is "Holy Father, keep them"—keep them in the knowledge of Thy Name (ver. 11).

At the present time He prays for them and not for the world, out of which His people are delivered. The unity, safety and welfare of His Church are now His care, and their unity He compares to the unity of the Father and the Son in the Godhead—"that they may be one, as we are one" (ver. 11).

And our Lord's intercession becomes the more earnest as He speaks of having "kept" those whom the Father had given Him; and who, living in the world, are to be hated by it and separated from it—separated that is from its ungodliness; and they will be sanctified (set apart for their sacred office) and made holy by their fellowship with Christ through the Holy Ghost.

Of these whom the Father gave to Him the only one lost is the son of perdition (one fit only for destruction), who had, we may believe, wilfully resisted the grace given to him.

Moreover, what our Lord asks for His Apostles He asks, likewise, for every member of His Church; that

they all may have a common union with Him by faith; and being thus in Him they will have a union one with another such as unites branches of the same tree. "They were all to be *one* by faith. *All*, and indeed as the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, thus were they to be in the Son and in the Father, and by that means one."² By this oneness of the disciples of Christ producing a visible unity and brotherhood, unbelievers will be convinced that Christianity is of God; and in early times they were often fain to exclaim "See how these Christians love one another!" In the present day how frequently do their hatred and divisions lead to the opposite result.

Further, Christ *wills* (which He can do as one with the Father) that His people shall be with Him and behold His glory; this will be the end of their faith; and, glancing with deep feeling at the doom of the world that knows not God—and which must be destruction and banishment from His presence—our Lord again speaks of His knowledge of the Father, Whose name He declares—whom He reveals—to His people; and He ends this great prayer with the thought that runs through it no less than through His last discourses, "*I in them*" (ver. 26); this is His Amen. He abides with His people, and dwells in them.

NOTES—LESSON IX.

1. "*In that day ye shall ask nothing—whatsoever ye shall ask the Father*" (xvi. 23). In this verse the first "*ask*" differs in meaning from the second; and in the Greek the words

² Lange.

are different. The former signifies, "ask questions," the latter "ask in prayer;" and in considering the text it is important to keep this distinction in view.

2. "*The Apostles still stand around their Lord.*" It has been supposed by some that our Lord's last discourse and His prayer were spoken after He had left the supper-room, and was walking with His disciples to Gethsemane; but both the Scripture text and the probabilities of the case point to a different conclusion.

The "Arise, let us go hence" of chapter xiv. 31 does not appear to have been acted upon immediately. Jesus and the eleven then rose, we may suppose, from the table, and our Lord, it is likely, continued His discourse, standing with His disciples around Him.

That this was so—that they did not leave the supper-room till Jesus had concluded both His discourse and prayer, seems evident from chapter xviii. 1, for there it is said, "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples."

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LESSON X.

THE ARREST—JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS—BEFORE PILATE.
(xviii. xix. 1-15.)

WITH minds solemnized by their Lord's last words of comfort and exhortation, by that heavenly prayer in which He had commended them to the Father, by His own example of holy resignation, the disciples followed Him down the steep descent of the Temple hill, and across the dark rocky valley of the Kedron, to a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives, whither, St. John tells us, "Jesus oftentimes resorted with His disciples." The other Evangelists inform us that its name was Gethsemane. It was an olive garden, with probably a dwelling-house, a press and a tower; and we may suppose that the owner of it was friendly to Him Who now sought its solitude, and was wont to do so.

The earlier Evangelists relate our Lord's agony in the garden; but St. John, omitting what they had so fully recorded, passes on at once to the seizing of Jesus, and before the act of betrayal—Judas' kiss and words of hypocritical greeting—he tells us how our Lord "went forth" to meet the traitor and his band, and said unto them, "Whom seek ye?" that when they had answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," and our Lord

replied, "I am He," "they went back and fell to the ground." He Whose words and look had this effect might easily, indeed, have smitten these craven men so that they would never more have troubled Him; but this was not His purpose; and, calmly waiting till they recovered their self-possession, He surrendered Himself into the hands of those who had come to take Him, stipulating only for the freedom of His disciples, that His words—"Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none"—might be literally fulfilled; but they had also, we cannot doubt, a spiritual signification.

St. John alone records that our Lord, when "He restrained the impetuous Peter"¹ with the command, "Put up thy sword into thy sheath," added the words: "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (ver. 11). He came to do His Father's will and to give Himself for us.

"—— No more He shrinketh,
Himself He offers up,
He sees it all, yet drinketh
For us that bitter cup.
He goes to meet the traitor,
The cross He will not shun—
He saith: 'I come, My Father,
Thy will, not Mine, be done!'"

Of the four Evangelists St. John alone mentions that Jesus was first taken before Annas, who sent Him bound to Caiaphas, who had been made high-priest by the Romans: Annas had previously held that high office, and was, probably, still looked upon as the real or legitimate high-priest of the Jews. He was, more-

¹ "Peter"—"Malchus." St. John alone mentions the name of the disciple and the name of the man whom he attacked. All reasons for observing secrecy had ceased to exist. He was servant of the high-priest, and St. John was "known unto the high-priest."

over, father-in-law to Caiaphas, which, indeed, St. John seems to assign as the reason why our Lord was in the first place brought before him. It is also sufficiently explained by the fact that he had for years been the ecclesiastical head of the nation, and was still a man of great influence.

From the text of St. John's Gospel it is not quite clear whether the examination there spoken of (xviii. 19-23) was conducted by Annas or Caiaphas; but comparing it with St. Matthew's account it seems evident that St. John refers to Caiaphas.

The three earlier Evangelists make no mention of the comparatively unimportant fact of our Lord being first taken before Annas.

While the members of the Sanhedrim were assembling Caiaphas took the opportunity of asking our Lord certain questions, especially about His doctrine. He assumed that Jesus had a secret doctrine which He communicated only to His disciples.

In acknowledgment of Caiaphas's official position our Lord answered His questions, and distinctly denied the secret doctrine that the high-priest imputed to Him. "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogues, and in the Temple whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me?" (vv. 19-21).

This was both a denial of the high-priest's suspicions and a reproof of the secrecy and underhand proceedings—the treachery, falsehood, and flagrant injustice—which Caiaphas himself employed without scruple against his prisoner, Whose death he had declared to be necessary to the salvation of the nation.

Our Lord's reply was doubtless displeasing to the

high-priest; for "one of the officers which stood by" (pretending that the words were wanting in respect) "struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest Thou the high-priest so?" (ver 22); and this first blow struck at our Lord's sacred Person was only a prelude to scenes of greater violence and grosser insult. Silence under the blow might have been taken as an acknowledgment that He was in fault; so our Lord replied in words of dignified reproof (see ver. 23).

St. John gives no account of our Lord's trial by the Sanhedrim before day-light (see Matt. xxvi. 59-66; Manual I. pp. 72, 73; Mark xiv. 55-64; Manual II. pp. 80-82); nor of its ratification after day-light as recorded by St. Luke (xxii. 66-71; Manual III. pp. 99, 100); but he passes on at once to Christ's arraignment before Pilate¹ (vv. 28-40).

The Roman capital of Palestine was Cæsarea, a magnificent city on the sea-coast about seventy miles from Jerusalem. It was the headquarters of the Roman soldiery, and the ordinary residence of the Roman procurator or governor; but at the national festivals he always came to Jerusalem with a strong military escort, for the double purpose of quelling, if need be, any popular tumult that might arise at this period of religious and political excitement, and to parade at the same time the power and authority of the Roman masters of the country. To Jerusalem came also, at these seasons, all the great men of the Jewish people.

¹ When St. John wrote, Christ's examination by the representative of the Roman Power, which was then predominant, would seem more interesting and important than the trial by the Jewish Sanhedrim, which, together with the national life of the Jews, had ceased to exist.

It was still early when the ecclesiastical rulers hurried our Lord from the chamber of the Sanhedrim, across the Temple area, to the judgment-hall or *prætorium* of the Roman Governor.

Pilate's very first question, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" offended the judicial dignity of the Jews; who, jealous of their own authority, answered haughtily, "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee" (xviii. 28-30). "We do not bring Him to you for your judgment, but that you may carry out our own, which has already condemned Him to death." In coming to Pilate they acknowledged his supremacy; was not that sufficient? And then followed a verbal contest between the Jewish rulers, who were resolved that Jesus should die, and the Roman Governor, who was not inclined to act merely as their tool; and he absolutely refused to confirm their sentence without inquiry.

He answered them ironically: "Take ye Him and judge Him according to your law." "If you can judge, you can also execute; but if I execute, I shall also judge." Their own punishment for the capital offence of blasphemy would have been stoning; but as they required the sanction of the Roman Governor, their course was to hand their prisoner over to him to be put to death in the Roman manner, which for one who was not a Roman citizen would be crucifixion; and thus our Lord's words would be fulfilled (see ver. 32).

Pilate now commenced his judicial examination of the Accused without further preamble: and for this purpose he called Him into the judgment-hall, which was inside the *prætorium*, not, however, that the proceedings should be secret (for this would be contrary

to Roman law), but that they might be undisturbed. Hither the Jewish priests did not follow Him, for, by entering the house of a Gentile, they would have incurred ceremonial defilement, and so been unable "to eat the Passover" (see Note 1).

Addressing our Lord, Pilate asks Him, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Before this question could be answered, it was necessary to know the sense in which it was to be taken. If Jesus said "Yes" in the Roman sense of the term, He would have acknowledged the charge of treason to the Roman authority. If He replied "No," then, according to its Jewish meaning, He would have disowned His Messiahship. Therefore our Lord asked, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" "Do you ask the question in a Roman or a Jewish sense?" Pilate repudiated at once the Jewish sense. "Am I a Jew?" he asks; "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me;" and he adds, "What hast Thou done?" that is what I wish to know.

Our Lord's answer (see ver. 36) relieves Pilate of any fear about His pretensions. His Kingdom "is not of this world," His is the Kingdom of truth. Politically His claims are absolutely harmless. Carelessly asking (in his indifference to all spiritual questions) "What is truth?" Pilate returns to the assembled priests, and declares to them that he finds no fault in their prisoner; and he offers to release Jesus according to the custom of the feast; but their only answer is, "Not this man, but Barabbas" (ver. 40).

Pilate did not at present yield fully to their demands, but he delivered his innocent prisoner over to his soldiers; and the Evangelist tells us how they scourged

Him, crowned Him with thorns, and mocked Him with pretended homage (xix. 1-3). Truly our Lord's forbearance and self-restraint were scarcely the least surprising of His miracles; but His language ever was, "The cup that My Father giveth Me, shall I not drink it?" (see Note 2).

The next scene is one of the most solemn and striking in the whole narrative of our Lord's Passion.

We beheld Him led forth by Pilate and shown to His bitter persecutors. Bruised and bleeding (for He has borne the stripes by which we are healed), crowned with thorns, and wearing the mock insignia of royalty, patient, uncomplaining, unresentful,—Pilate supposes that His foes will be moved to pity by the sight, and he says, "Behold the Man"—"Is this Man a King? An insurgent? A Man to be feared as dangerous? How innocent and how miserable! Is it not enough?"¹ But the only answer of these worshippers and priests of the Most High is, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

In vain does Pilate remonstrate, "I find no fault in Him. Take ye Him and crucify Him." But they declare, "He blasphemously claims to be the Son of God, and by our law the punishment of blasphemy is death."

This mysterious claim only makes the Roman Governor wish the more to save Him; and he anxiously asks, "Whence art Thou?"

He seeks again to release Him; but the Jews make answer, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend."

This argument is all-powerful. Pilate had not cared to conciliate the people he governed; and if he

¹ Stier.

thwarted them in this matter, they would represent his conduct in a treasonable light to the jealous and vengeful Tiberius. He must then sacrifice this harmless enthusiast to his own interests; so, mounting the judgment-seat or judicial throne that stood upon the Pavement (in Hebrew Gabbatha) before the prætorian palace, he says, mockingly, to the Jewish rulers to whom he now yields, "Behold your King!" and the fierce retort again is, "Crucify Him!" while to Pilate's sneering rejoinder, "Shall I crucify your King?" they answer, "We have no king but Cæsar."¹ And thus—openly renouncing their allegiance to Jehovah, rejecting their Messiah, claiming the Roman emperor as their king—they consummate their national apostasy.

NOTES—LESSON X.

1. "*And so been unable to eat the Passover.*" If our Lord was crucified on the 15th Nisan this must refer not to the Paschal Supper, which had been eaten the evening before; but to the peace-offerings—sacrifices of sheep or bullocks, called by the Jews *Chagigah*, or feast-offering—that were partaken of the next day. (See Deut. xvi. 2; Exod. xxiii.)

2. "O wonderful the wonders left undone!
And scarce less wonderful than those He wrought;
O self-restraint, passing all human thought,
To have all power, and be as having none!
O self-denying love, which felt alone
For need of others, never for its own!"—*Trench.*

² They thus unconsciously bore testimony to the fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy (see Gen. xlix. 10).

LESSON XI.

THE CRUCIFIXION—THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT—ST. JOHN'S TESTIMONY—THE BURIAL. (xix. 16-42.)

ST. JOHN tells us (xix. 14) that when Pilate took his seat on the judicial throne to give judgment against our Lord, it was "about the sixth hour;" whereas St. Mark says "it was the third hour, and they crucified Him" (xv. 25); and the three earlier Evangelists all relate that there was darkness over all the land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour (Matt. xxvii. 45; Mark xv. 33; Luke xxiii. 44); but this darkness did not begin for some time after our Lord was nailed to the cross.

Various explanations have been given of this apparent discrepancy in respect of time between St. John and his fellow Evangelist; and from these we cite the two that appear to be the most satisfactory, and either of which may be adopted without forcing the sense of the Scripture narrative.

According to the Jewish mode of reckoning the hours from six to six, St. Mark's third hour would be 9 A.M., and if St. John adhered to the same method of computation his sixth hour would answer to our noon or twelve o'clock; but it has been supposed by some that St. John, writing many years afterwards, at Ephesus,

adopted a system of counting the hours similar to our own, so that his sixth hour means six o'clock in the morning. Allowing, then, for the walk to Golgotha and the necessary preparations, St. John's hour for the close of the trial (six o'clock) would be in harmony with St. Mark's statement that the actual Crucifixion was nine o'clock (Mark xv. 25), three hours being allowed for the procession and preparation.

Others, who think it most probable that St. John did not depart from the Jewish method of reckoning, observe that he says "*about* the sixth hour," or, as it may be rendered, "it was toward noon;" and that St. Mark's words, "it was the third hour and they crucified Him," only have reference to the time at which the sentence was pronounced and our Lord was given over to the soldiers. Amongst the ancients, the hours were not so accurately divided as with us.

Leaving this an open question, we may, at least, be quite sure that the Jewish rulers wished to hurry forward our Lord's Crucifixion with as little loss of time as possible, for it was a feast day and the preparation for the Sabbath.

As soon, therefore, as Pilate had passed sentence, "they took Jesus and led Him away" (ver. 16).

St. John alone tells us that Jesus at first bore His cross, but we know from the other Gospels that it was afterwards transferred to Simon of Cyrene, doubtless because our Lord (sinking, as we may suppose, under long-continued suffering of mind and body) was unable any longer to support the load.

Golgotha is reached, and here, in a place outside the city-gates, but in the midst of its life and activity, and near one of its busy thoroughfares, the cross is set up.

Pilate, not content with the mocking words he had already spoken to the chief priests, still follows them with irony and sarcasm. For "a title" or inscription, to be placed over the cross on which our Lord is to suffer, he writes the words, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS" (see Note 1); and that it may be read by all people he writes it (as St. John tells us) in Hebrew, and Greek and Latin, at that time the three principal languages of the world.

Pilate thus gave our Lord His rightful title, while he at the same time degraded, in the person of their King, the whole Jewish nation.

The chief priests, whose hatred to the Lord followed Him even to the cross, and who came to Golgotha to convince themselves that their rejected Messiah is indeed nailed to the accursed tree, note the mocking inscription, and hasten back to Pilate, saying "Write not, the King of the Jews, but that He said, I am the King of the Jews." The Roman Governor is in no mood to attend to their complaints. He had been driven by the pressure they had put upon him to give up to them the Victim of their hatred—the Man he had pronounced innocent again and again; but he will not gratify them in any minor matter. Nay, his deliberate purpose is to thwart and insult them, and his short and decisive answer is, "What I have written I have written" (ver. 22).

Meanwhile the soldiers are all unconsciously fulfilling the prophecy, "They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots" (Psa. xxii. 18). The outer garments² they divide amongst

² The square tasselled garment (see Note 8, p. 67; Manual I.).

themselves, but who shall possess the seamless shirt is decided by lot (ver. 24).

But friends as well as foes stand around the Cross. The beloved disciple himself is there, and the faithful women (see Note 2), amongst whom our Lord's mother is mentioned; and He, unmindful of His own suffering, commends her to the care of St. John the Apostle.

And in this hour of her sorrow she needed one on whom to lean. Though "highly favoured and blessed among women," a sword was now piercing her own soul;—and how immediately and tenderly the loving disciple obeyed His Lord's dying injunction we gather from the words, "From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (ver. 27).

"After this"—that is, after the three hours' darkness and after the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," recorded by St. Matthew—"Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, *I thirst*" (see Note 3), and these words were at once the truthful and natural expression of His bodily wants and cravings, and the fulfilment of the prophetic language of David, "My tongue cleaveth to my gums"—by which (though primarily descriptive of his own condition) he foretold a part of our Lord's Messianic sufferings.

But now the conflict draws to a close. Nay, our Lord Himself proclaims that "*It is finished*;" and bowing His head, yields His spirit to His Father.

In contemplating the mystery of Christ's Death upon the Cross, we must ever bear in mind that His sufferings, whether of mind or body, were vicarious. He was the sinner's Substitute. By His stripes we are healed; yet "the atoning power of all our Lord's suf-

ferings lies in this *holy* bearing of the judgment which God has indissolubly linked with human sin; not in His physical pains, His wounds, His blood as such, but in the holy travail of His soul, when He voluntarily underwent the penalty affixed by God to sin, received the bitter cup from God's hand into His, the Son of Man's; thus by fulfilling its purpose, accomplishing its aims—*exhausting* the judgment."¹

The Romans usually allowed those who suffered the ignominious punishment of crucifixion to linger until life slowly ebbed away; and after death the bodies were left to be consumed by the natural processes of decay, or to become the food of birds and beasts; but this would have been abomination to the Jews, for their law expressly commanded that the body of him who had died the accursed death of hanging should "not remain all night upon the tree," but be buried the same day (Deut. xxi. 23); and in the case of the bodies of our Lord and the malefactors, there were, besides, special reasons for speedy removal; the next day being a festival and Sabbath, and the continued and appalling spectacle of the Holy One upon the Cross might raise a tumult amongst the Galilæans and other pilgrims who had come to the feast.

The chief priests, therefore, petitioned Pilate that the legs of the crucified ones might be broken (not, in this case, to add torture, but as a customary method of hastening death) and their bodies taken away (ver. 31).

The soldiers charged with the execution of the order "brake" (St. John tells us) the legs of the malefactors, "but when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs" (vv. 32, 33);

¹ *The Foundations of our Faith.*

and thus again they unconsciously fulfilled the Scripture which was at once a command respecting the Paschal Lamb and a prophecy concerning Him of Whom that lamb was a type (Ex. xii. 46). Nor was this all, for "one of the soldiers" (to make sure of our Lord's death) "with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (ver. 34). And here we have a striking instance of that ocular testimony that is distinctly traceable all through St. John's Gospel; for that Evangelist, who more than any other has revealed to us the inner mystery of our Lord's nature, bears solemn and emphatic testimony to what he seems to regard as a supernatural occurrence, and as having a peculiar significance (see ver. 35). To this event he probably refers in his first Epistle (v. 6-8).

Again this piercing of the side was a fulfilment of another prophecy (Zech. xii. 10), and is spoken of in connexion with our Lord's Second Advent (ver. 37).

Pilate, in whose power it was to allow private burial to those who had been executed as criminals, appears readily to have granted the request of Joseph of Arimathæa with reference to the body of Jesus, after making the necessary inquiries of the centurion (Mark xv. 44, 45) regarding our Lord's death (John xix. 38).

Then Joseph and Nicodemus took away the Body of Jesus, and wrapping it in linen cloths, with spices (myrrh and aloes about an hundred pound weight) after the custom of the Jews, laid it in Joseph's new sepulchre, in a garden close to the place of crucifixion, also belonging to Joseph. (See Manual II., Note 1 (*k*), p. 95.)

NOTES—LESSON XI.

1. The inscription on the Cross is given by the Four Evangelists as follows :—

St. Matthew . This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.

St. Mark . . The King of the Jews.

St. Luke . . This is the King of the Jews.

St. John . . Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

2. "*And the faithful women.*" It is often assumed that three women only are spoken of in John xix. 25 ; but it is more likely that they refer to four (see Note 1, p. 34, Manual II.), viz., Mary, our Lord's Mother ; her sister (supposed by some to be Salome, St. John's own mother) ; Mary the wife of Cleopas or Alphæus ; and Mary of Magdala.

3. The Evangelists have recorded seven utterances, or cries, of our Lord upon the Cross as follows :—

(1) "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (St. Luke).

(2) "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (St. Luke).

(3) "Woman, behold thy Son,—Behold thy mother" (St. John).

(4) My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" (St. Matthew and St. Mark).

(5) "I thirst" (St. John).

(6) "It is finished" (St. John).

(7) "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit" (St. Luke).

LESSON XII.

ST. JOHN AS A WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION—
CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS NARRATIVE—THE EASTER
MORNING—JESUS AND THE ASSEMBLED APOSTLES—
ST. THOMAS—THE SECOND MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT
OF FISHES. (xx. xxi.)

HAD the body that was laid with such loving care in the rich man's grave continued to slumber there until it mingled with the dust, Jesus could not have been the Messiah of Whom the prophet had said, "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption;" and if not the Messiah—if not the Christ of God—the Jews who said, "we have a law, and by our law He ought to die, *because He made Himself the Son of God,*" would have been right; and had He not pledged His word to rise again on the third day?

Those, then, who deny His having done so, take away the essential foundation of Christianity; for, as St. Paul declares, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins, and we are found false witnesses of God: because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ; Whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not" (1 Cor. xv. 14, 15).

Happily, however, the Resurrection of Jesus is one of the best attested facts in all history; and not the

least valuable testimony to it is St. John's as recorded in his Gospel.

Reading his narrative of the Easter morning every one must see that none but an eye-witness could have written it, "He that *saw* bare record, and his record is true." We mark its vividness and circumstantiality, and the improbability that such a particular reference to minute details could by any possibility have been invented. The record carries conviction with it. The detail, however minute, is not trivial to the loving Apostle; for it cleared away his doubts and developed his faith, while as yet he had not seen the Risen Saviour.¹

The Sabbath is over, and St. John takes us at once to the sepulchre, where the love of Mary Magdelene had led her while it was yet dark; and when day broke, she found the tomb not only open, but empty. She hastens at once to seek St. Peter and St. John, and when she finds them she can only exclaim, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre; and we" (I and the other women)² "know not where they have laid Him" (xx. 2). Clearly no thought of a resurrection is yet in Mary's mind.

Asking no questions, but sharing deeply in Mary's agitation (and intent only on beholding for themselves what they had just heard from the lips of another), the two disciples run together to the place of burial; but, contrary to what we should have anticipated from John's less impetuous disposition, he is the first to reach the sacred spot. Here their different characters

¹ *Foundations of the Faith.*

² Namely, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and Joanna (compare St. Mark and St. Luke).

are more naturally developed. John *looks* into the tomb, and, seeing the linen clothes lying, stands lost in contemplation at the entrance ; but his companion boldly *enters*, and his quick glance detects not only the cloth that had swathed the body, but the napkin which had bound the sacred head, carefully folded in a place by itself. St. John follows him, and draws the conclusions that are probable from all that meets his eye. No ruthless hand had robbed the grave and stolen the body of the Lord ; for, in that case the grave-clothes would also have been taken, and the despoilers would not have stayed or troubled themselves to fold and arrange them. Gradually the truth dawns upon his reflective mind. He sees and believes, and confesses that up to this moment he had not understood the predictions of the Resurrection.

The two disciples return to their own home ; but Mary, who had followed them more slowly to the sepulchre, and arrived, perhaps, just after their departure, stands weeping without ; forgetting her Lord's promise, she sees only the desecration of the tomb and the destruction of her hopes. But as she weeps, she stoops down and looks into the sepulchre. It is no longer empty, for two angels in white are there, who ask her why she weeps ; and while she is talking with them, Jesus Himself draws near, and asks, "Why weepest thou ? Whom seekest thou ?" But she knows Him not until He speaks again, and calls her by her name, "Mary." Then she sees it is the Lord ; and in her great joy she would clasp His feet ; but no, this external homage and reverence towards His visible Body He gently represses, and directs her thoughts rather to that union by faith with Him—that more blessed though secret touch which will be,

when, having ascended to the Father, He shall return spiritually and abide with His people; or as the Christian poet expresses it:—

“Love with infant haste would fain
 Touch Him and adore;
 But a deeper, holier gain
 Mercy keeps in store.
 ‘Touch me not; awhile believe Me:
 Touch Me not till heaven receive me:
 Then draw near, and never leave me,
 Then I go no more.’”—*Kemble.*

Then our Lord makes Mary the joyful herald of the Resurrection to the disciples, whom He graciously calls His “brethren” (ver. 17).

That same day, at evening, the disciples were taking counsel of each other, and worshipping together with closed or fastened doors for fear of the rulers—who, having destroyed the Master, as they supposed, would show no mercy to His disciples—when Jesus stood in the midst, and said, “Peace be unto you;” and He solemnly confirms their authority as His Apostles—“As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you,”—and commits to them and to His Church the exercise of a godly discipline—the admitting to Church privileges, to Church fellowship and to the Sacraments, with the power to exclude from them;—the remitting and retaining of sins, answering to the “loosing and binding” spoken of in St. Matthew (xvi. 19, xviii. 18).²

And as God, when He made man, breathed into His nostrils the breath of life (Gen. ii. 7), so now the Divine Son “breathes into the souls of His disciples the breath of a new life,” even the Holy Ghost, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, as an earnest

² See Barrow on *The Power of the Keys*, and Bp. Wilson.

of that fuller gift which our Lord had promised to bestow after His ascension to the Father.

One only of the Apostles (Thomas called Didymus) was absent from this evening's conference. Naturally, we may suppose, of a desponding disposition, and not understanding the divine necessity of all that had happened to His Lord and Master, he was probably quite overwhelmed by what he looked upon as the utter destruction of his hopes, and so he refused their testimony. Unless he shall see in Jesus' hands the print of the nails ;—nay, unless he may put his finger upon them—and thrust his hand into His side, he will not believe. Strange unbelief after all that he had heard from the lips of his Lord ! but for a whole week does he remain in uncertainty and doubt. Christ had said, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." And these words were now fulfilled ; this joy was possessed by all but Thomas, and herein was his punishment.

Another evening of the first day of the week has come round ; and again the disciples assemble to pray together. Thomas is with them. Although still doubting our Lord's resurrection, he has not forsaken the Apostolic fellowship ; he still forms one of that holy company. And now again (the doors being fastened), Jesus stands among them ; and gives them the salutation of peace. Then, turning at once to Thomas, He takes up His disciple's own words, and says, "Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side ; and be not faithless, but believing."

Thomas, smitten with contrition, no longer thinks of conditions of belief ; for he knows at once, and is

sure that "it is the Lord" Who speaks to him ; and hastening to confess Him, he exclaims, with his whole heart, " My Lord, and my God !"

Nor does his Lord upbraid him ; but He pronounces a blessing on those who believe without the evidence of sense which Thomas needed (vv. 19-29 ; see also Mark xvi. 14-18 ; Luke xxiv. 36-43).

St. John, however, is careful to inform us that Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples of which there is no record. His Gospel is but a selection out of the infinite store, and its purpose is so to bring the Lord before us that we may believe Him to be the Christ the Son of God ; and that believing we may have life through Him (vv. 30, 31).

All commentators are of opinion that these solemn words originally formed the conclusion of St. John's Gospel ; and that the twenty-first chapter was written as a postscript to it,¹ probably for the sake of giving an accurate account of our Lord's words to St. Peter about himself and correcting the erroneous inference that he was not to die.

The scene is upon the Galilæan lake. The disciples (Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, John and his brother James, and two other disciples) had been toiling all night on the Sea of Tiberias² and taken nothing ; and when the day dawns they see one solitary stranger upon the shore some hundred yards from them. He asks them of their success, and when they obey His direction and throw the net on the right side of the ship, they are unable to draw it for the multitude of

¹ Not, however, that the authorship is doubtful. St. John's hand and mode of expression are traceable in it, and it is found in the oldest MSS.

² John's term for the Lake of Gennesaret or the Sea of Galilee.

fishes. The beloved disciple first recognized the miracle, and by the miracle Him Who wrought it. He knew it was the Lord (see Note 1).

Our Lord ever performed His miracles with some spiritual purpose,—not merely to excite wonder. They were all designed to teach some holy lesson. And so this miraculous draught of fishes, like that other related by St. Luke (v. 1-10; see Manual III. pp. 38-41), shadowed forth the first throwing of the Gospel net and the ingathering of the redeemed.

The disciples stand once more around their Lord, and after their silent and mysterious meal He addresses His thrice repeated question to St. Peter, that the three-fold denial of the repentant Apostle may be cancelled by a three-fold confession (xxi. 15-17). This Jesus graciously accepts; and by a ministerial charge thrice given receives him back, as it were, into His favour and confidence; and further signifies to him by what death he should glorify God. Then follow the question and answer about St. John himself.

Our Lord's words in reference to St. John (vv. 18-22) seem to imply that he would "tarry" (that is remain alive) until His Lord should come; but in what sense our Lord spoke them, or in what sense St. John understood them, is not clear. St. John's only purpose seems to be to show that they by no means necessarily implied that he should not see death. Remembering how frequently our Lord spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem as a coming of the Son of Man to judgment, and knowing that St. John (perhaps alone of the Apostles) lived to see that event, we may so understand our Lord's words.

Conclusion. In these Gospel studies we have now considered our Lord under the fourfold aspect in which He is presented to us by the Evangelists, and our aim has been to understand Him better, and to obtain a deeper insight into the mysteries of His redemption; but most true it is that "to know all about Christ is one thing; to *know Christ* is quite another thing;" it is not a mere outward gazing upon Christ that will benefit us, for He has Himself told us that if we would understand His doctrine, we must do His will.

If, however, by God's help, we see more plainly than before that these Gospels are the records that God has given of His Son; and that Christ's words are indeed the words of eternal life; if a nearer view of His Divine Person moves us to exclaim with one Apostle, "My Lord and My God," and to confess with another "We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ the Son of the living God," then this study of the Gospel narratives will bring to us its blessing.

NOTES—LESSON XII.

1. "*He knew it was the Lord.*" This was Christ's sixth appearance. The several appearances may be given thus:—

(1) To Mary Magdalene on the Easter morning (John xx. 11-18).

(2) To St. Peter. This is mentioned indirectly—compare Luke xxiv. 34, with 1 Cor. xv. 5.

(3) To the two disciples on their way to Emmaus; on the afternoon of the Resurrection day (Luke xxiv. 13-31).

(4) To ten Apostles, and to the two disciples from Emmaus and others (see Luke xxiv. 33), that same evening.

(5) That day week Christ again appears to His Apostles assembled as before,—Thomas with them (John xx. 26-29).

The Passover week over, the Apostles retired to Galilee.

(6) He first manifests Himself to them as they are fishing on the lake (John xxi.).

(7) Again He meets them on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 16-20).

(8) He appears to James, the Lord's brother (1 Cor. xv. 7).

(9) Once more in the Holy City Jesus leads His Apostles out in the direction of Bethany, and ascends to heaven in their presence (Luke xxiv. 50-53).

The differences between the several Evangelists' narratives of the appearances of the risen Lord have been often commented on. They are really less than might at first sight be supposed. For instance, at first sight we remark that whereas the three Evangelists mention several women as repairing to the Sepulchre early on Easter Day, St. John mentions Mary Magdalene only; but looking more closely into St. John's account, we observe that he makes Mary Magdalene say, on her return to the city, "*We* know not where they have laid Him," implying that others had been with her.

Again at first sight it seems difficult to reconcile St. Matthew's statement that Jesus appeared to *the women* on their way from the garden to the city, with St. John's narrative, which seems to imply that the Magdalene went *alone* to tell the disciples. But as we have seen that St. John implies that other women were in the garden, how natural would it be that while the eager Magdalene went on before to tell the disciples, those other holy women followed more leisurely, and *to them* the Lord appeared.

Turning to St. Luke we find the two disciples at Emmaus speaking of "certain women" having reported that the tomb was empty, but without any hint that they had seen the Lord. This at first seems difficult to reconcile with St. Matthew's account of the appearance to the women. But

putting St. Matthew and St. John together, all is harmonized :—these two at Emmaus had heard the Magdalene's report, but had started for Emmaus without waiting for the other women whom our Lord had met.

Thus apparent discrepancies turn out to be undesigned coincidences when more closely examined.

2. *Chronology of the Gospels.* If we knew all, we could doubtless harmonize the chronology of the four narratives. Not knowing all, we may well expect to find it impossible.

(1) All chronologists are, however, agreed that *Our Lord's Nativity* took place earlier by some four years, than the date assigned to it in our ordinary chronological system.

This is proved by the date of Herod's death, which Josephus connects with an eclipse of the moon, which took place on the 15th of March in the year of Rome 750 or B.C. 4. As Herod died after our Lord's birth, the date of the Nativity is thrown back to the very beginning of B.C. 4, or to the end of B.C. 5.

(2) *The date of the Baptism* is stated by St. Luke to have been just as our Lord was completing His thirtieth year, and was therefore early in A.U.C. 780 or A.D. 27.

(3) *The duration of the Ministry.* This question must be decided by St. John's Gospel. A fuller examination of the date will be found in Canon Norris's *Key to the Gospels*, p. 135.

Learned men are about equally divided on the question whether the ministry lasted two and a quarter or three and a quarter years. The question depends for its answer on the further question, What was the nameless feast marked in the fifth chapter of St. John. And if it were the Passover (as seems most probable) can it, or can it not, be identified with the Passover mentioned vi. 4? If it can, the ministry lasted two and a quarter years only: if it cannot, three and a quarter years.

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the city of New York.



